

SURVEY OF SENIOR PASTORS

Fall 2025



Research and Development

United Pentecostal Church International

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the fifth survey of senior pastors with the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). The goal of this survey is to better understand our congregations and help districts and ministries at UPCI fulfill the mission of bringing the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church.

The survey was available in English, Spanish, and French from October 1, 2025, to December 15, 2025.¹ It received 486 responses from 54 districts across the US and Canada. Individual responses remain anonymous and results in this report are presented in a way to protect the identity of individual pastors and churches. Responses largely represent the actual distribution of pastors, so this analysis treats this sample as representative of the organization as a whole.²

Key findings:

- Most congregations are relatively small. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of those surveyed reported 100 or fewer attendees on a typical Sunday.
- In the last five years, smaller congregations were more likely to report growth in attendance, compared to larger congregations. This was especially true for congregations with fewer than 50 attendees five years ago.
- Most congregations own their building and report good physical condition, though there is a clear shift in that more churches today feel they have less space than needed.
- Congregational demographics are diverse across age and racial groups, with about half of attendees belonging to racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Worship styles are largely blended, with modern elements like worship bands and guitars used more frequently than traditional elements, such as choirs and organs.
- Surveyed pastors indicated a stronger emphasis on personal practices such as prayer, attendance, and witnessing but less emphasis on fasting.
- Churches most commonly offer programming centered around prayer, education, and music and embrace technology, especially video projection, livestreaming, and Facebook.
- Responses from pastors support a prioritization of their overall wellbeing and a resilient commitment to their congregations and their callings.
- A majority of pastors are paid full-time for their work in the church. However, those who are not paid a full-time salary were more likely to work outside of the congregation and report financial need as motivation for additional jobs compared to those who are paid full-time.
- Churches appear financially healthy, showing additional improvement from 2020. On average, nearly all church income is from the faithful giving of tithes and offerings, and average church expense categories are consistent with recommended allocations.
- Pastors responded optimistically when asked about congregational values and practices, the fit between leadership and the congregation, and the future outlook for the congregation.

¹ The US portion of this survey was done in participation with 2025 national survey of congregations conducted by Faith Communities Today. See note i in Appendix B for more on survey design.

² Appendix A includes a summary of respondent demographics. See note ii in Appendix B for more on survey bias.

2025 PASTOR SURVEY

CONGREGATION CHARACTERISTICS

Percentage of congregations

Have a worship band 83%

Have a choir 44%

With good building condition 74%

In good financial health 70%

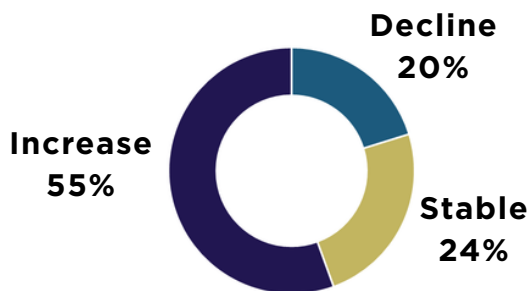


Over 9 out of 10 congregations offer religious education for children and adults



Over 7 out of 10 congregations currently offer a livestream of services

Congregation growth over the last five years



PASTOR CHARACTERISTICS

99% of pastors express a good pastor-congregation fit

90% of pastors express a positive outlook on congregation's future

76% of pastors never doubted calling to ministry

62% of pastors are full-time and paid with the church

PASTORS REPORT

Percentage of congregations with "a lot" of emphasis on

Prayer and study 72%

Regular attendance 70%

Witnessing 49%

Parental discipleship 47%

Fasting 24%

ATTENDEE CHARACTERISTICS

FEMALE

55%

LIVE CLOSE

41%

MINORITY GROUPS

47%

AGE 35-64

35%

VOLUNTEER

33%

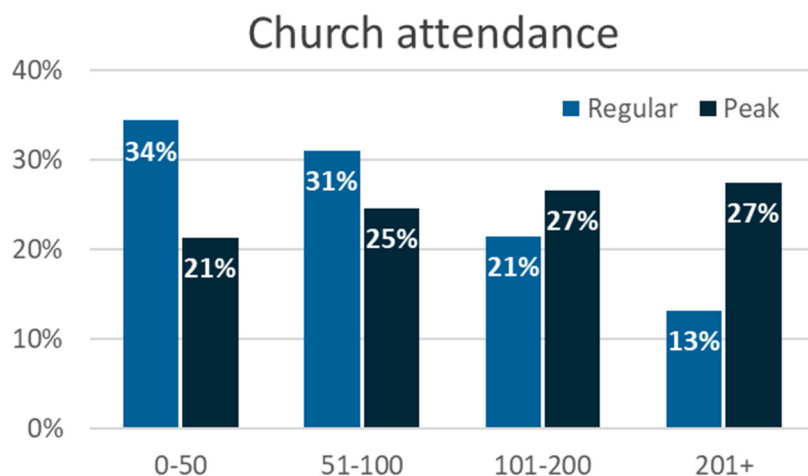
NEW WITHIN 5 YEARS

24%

Attendance

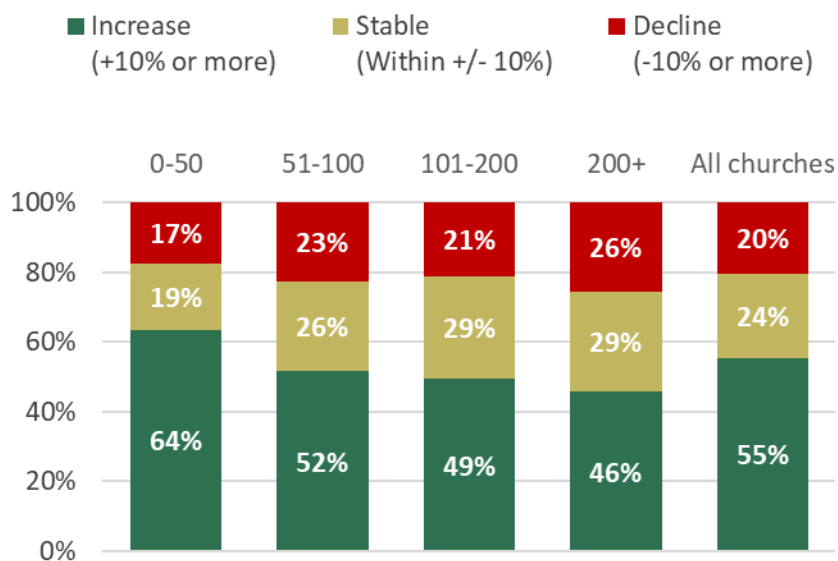
Most congregations are small, and smaller congregations show strongest growth in attendance

On a normal week, most churches have a relatively small congregation. For typical weekly services, churches surveyed were nearly split into thirds of those with less than 50 (34%), 51 to 100 (31%), and more than 100 attendees (34%). For the highest attendance service, churches surveyed were split fairly evenly between those with less than 50 (21%), 51 to 100 (25%), 101 to 200 (27%), and more than 200 attendees (27%).



In addition to current attendance, surveyed pastors also reported attendance for 2019. Overall, more than half of all pastors surveyed (55%) reported higher attendance in 2025 compared to 2019. Almost a quarter (24%) reported attendance was about the same, and 20% reported a decline. This pattern of growing attendance was more prevalent in smaller congregations, specifically those with 50 or fewer regular attendees.

Change in regular attendance since 2019



Many churches continue to offer a livestream, but online services serve a relatively smaller audience

Today, 75% of churches surveyed currently maintain an online service option, or livestream. When asked if they expect to continue this option in 5 years, a strong majority (82%) agreed. This marks a significant change in service availability compared to a few years ago. In 2019, only 34% offered a virtual option.

Although it is common today for churches to make services available online — reflecting a notable shift since 2019 — the size of the online audience for the typical church has remained about the same. The median online audience was 24 in 2019 and 25 in 2025. Similarly, the middle 50% of churches reported an online audience reaching between 10 to 55 people in 2019 compared to 10 to 62 people in 2025.

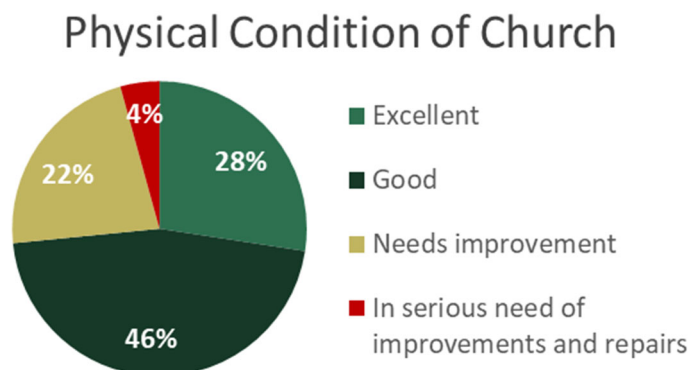
Facilities

Congregations mainly own the space in which they meet, with fewer sharing or renting facilities

The majority of congregations (76%) own the building in which they meet, with fewer renting (19%) or sharing space (5%). Of those that share space, commonly mentioned locations included storefronts (28%), another congregation (21%), or another setup (45%) such as a warehouse or government building. Most surveyed congregations (78%) allow their facilities to be used by outside groups. Common uses include other congregations (42%), support groups (12%), or nonprofit organizations (10%).

Most buildings are in good physical condition

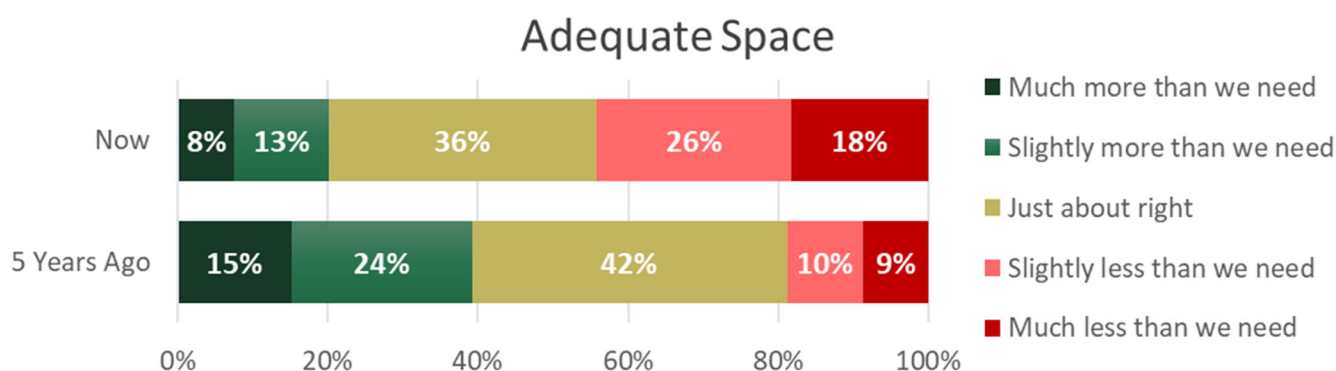
When asked about the physical condition of church buildings, about a quarter (28%) indicated their condition as “excellent”, and many (46%) indicated “good.” A smaller portion (22%) of the respondents reported that their building “needs improvement”, while only 4% reported that their building is “in serious need of improvements and repairs”.



While many churches still report adequate space, there is a noticeable shift toward space limitations

When asked about seating capacity, responses ranged from 25 to 1,300. The median seating capacity was 175, meaning half of congregations reported fewer than 175 seats and half reported more. A very small portion (3%) reported fewer than 50 seats. More than 40% indicated capacity between 51 to 150 seats, plus another nearly 40% with capacity between 151 and 350 seats. Only 15% of respondents indicated a seating capacity greater than 350.

When comparing space needs over time, responses suggest a shift toward churches feeling more limited in their available space. Today, fewer churches report having excess space, while a larger portion indicated having slightly or much less space than needed. Over the last five years, the percent of congregations who reported less space than needed has nearly doubled (10% to 25% slightly less, and 9% to 18% much less). Similarly, the percent of congregations who reported more space than needed has nearly halved in the same period (15% to 8% much more, and 24% to 13% slightly more).



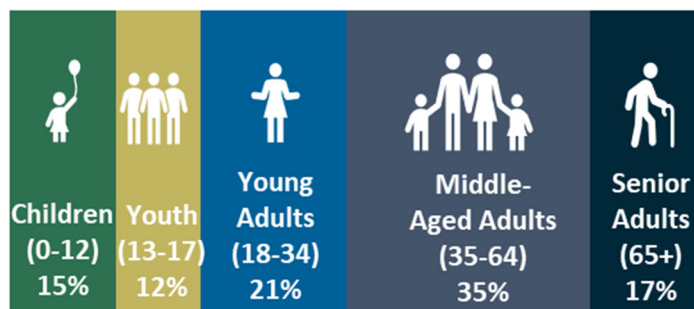
Demographics

This section summarizes the demographics of all congregations of the UPCI in North America in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity.³ These are based on the estimate of pastors of each congregation. The results reflect overall trends across all UPCI churches and are scaled by typical church attendance to represent all attendees in a typical week across North America.

Attendance spans multiple generations, with middle-aged adults being the largest age demographic

Congregations reflect a broad age range across all stages of life. Middle adults (ages 35-64) represent the largest portion of attendees with 35%, while young adults (ages 18-34) account for 21%. Seniors (ages 65+) represent about 17% of all attendees. Children (ages 0-12) and youth (ages 13-17) make up smaller portions of 15% and 12%. This range of ages represents diversity of generations across local churches.

Attendees by age



Slight female majority in attendance

Women make up a larger share of attendees in comparison to men. Based on responses of pastors, approximately 55% of attendees are women, while 45% are men. Based on responses of pastors, 64% have a female majority within their congregation, while only 13% have a male majority within their congregation. The remaining 23% have an equal amount of male and female attendees.

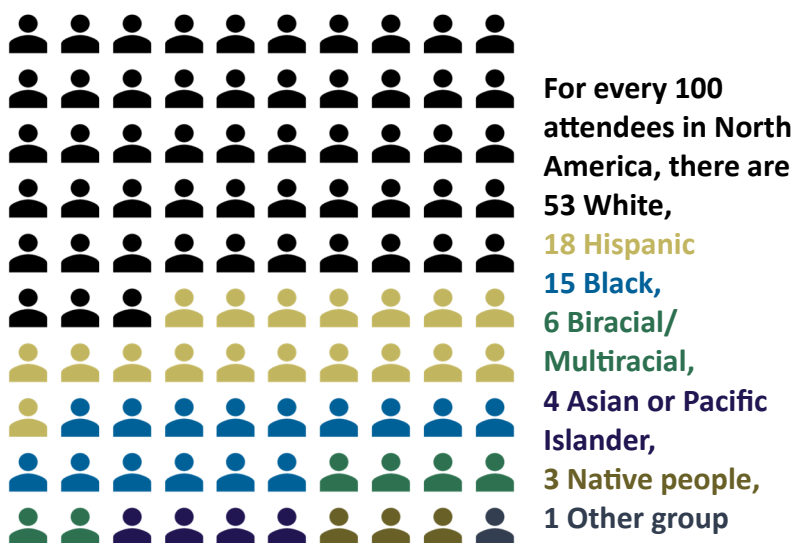
Attendees by gender



Nearly half of attendees are minorities

The largest ethnicity group is White, Non-Hispanics, which represent 53% of attendees. Hispanic (18%) and Black, Non-Hispanic (15%) attendees are the two largest minority groups and each represent a significant portion of weekly attendance. Biracial/Multiracial individuals represent 6% of attendees. Smaller attendee demographics include Asian or Pacific Islanders (4%), Native People Groups (3%), and other racial groups (1%).

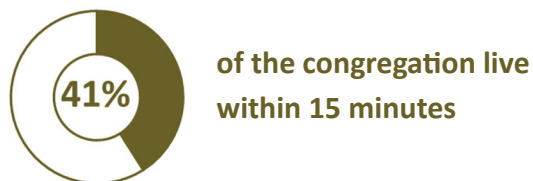
Attendees by ethnicity



³ See note iii for more on race and ethnicity groups used in this survey.

Demographics

This section presents several demographic factors of the regularly participating adults in their congregation. These are based on percentages reported by surveyed pastors. The results reflect overall trends across all UPCI churches and are scaled by typical church attendance to represent all attendees in a typical week across North America.



Over 1 in 3 attendees attend a church near where they live. Across all congregations, about 41% of attendees live within 15 minutes of the church. This shows how most local churches primarily serve their extended community.



About 33% of the congregation regularly volunteers. This indicates that about 1 in 3 adults are volunteering. While the majority are not volunteering regularly, this is consistent with a healthy level of volunteer engagement.



Nearly one-fourth of attendees are relatively new to the church. Based on the churches surveyed, 24% of attendees have joined within the past five years. This shows that local congregations are reaching new people.



Participation in small groups appears mixed or inconsistent across North America. Almost two thirds (65%) of congregations offer small groups. Only 21% of adults in those congregations are a part of a small group, based on the average response. While many churches offer small groups, most people do not participate.



The percentage of college graduates within some churches may be under-representative of the community. Based on the average response, 20% of adults of the congregation have a college degree, which is lower than the national average of 37%.



Based on the response of pastors, 17% of adult attendees are immigrants. In comparison, the national average is 14%, which suggests immigrant representation is reflective of the community in many congregations.



Most congregations report a small percentage of adult attendees living below the poverty level. In a typical congregation, 13% live below the poverty level. This is close to the national average of 11% but indicates that poverty is not a dominant characteristic in most congregations.

Worship

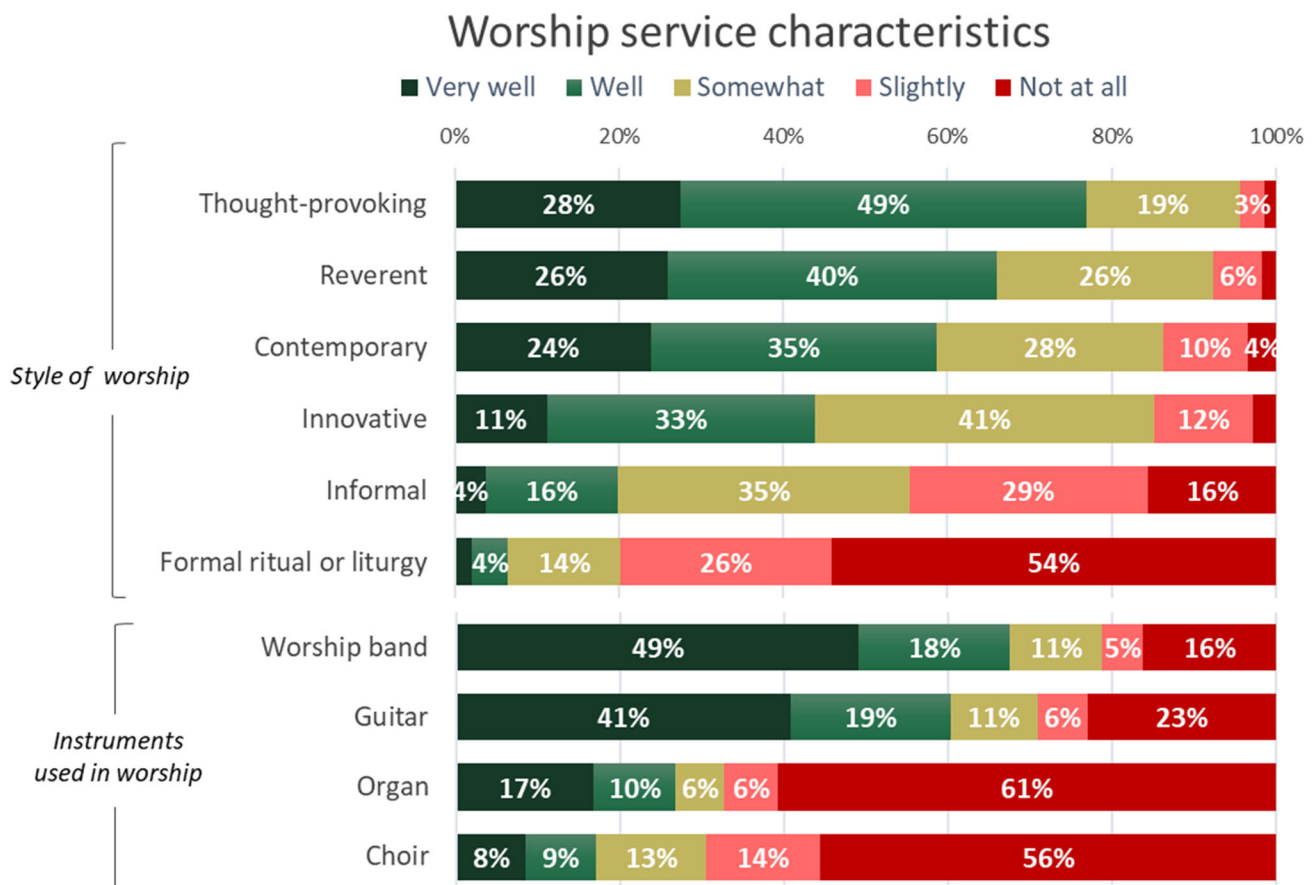
Worship styles tend to be blended, with thought-provoking and reverent describing most churches

Pastors were asked how well certain styles of worship or the use of various instruments described/fit their congregation. The majority of pastors surveyed described their worship services as thought-provoking, with 77% indicating that this described their services “well” or “very well”. A similar pattern is seen with reverent (66%) and contemporary (59%) styles, suggesting these commonly describe worship services.

In contrast, informal worship was less descriptive overall, with 45% indicating “slightly” or “not at all”. Formal ritual or liturgical worship was the least emphasized, as 54% of respondents indicated that it does not describe their worship experience. Overall, worship styles appear to be primarily thoughtful and reverent, with many churches taking a blended approach rather than relying on one specific style.

Modern instruments tend to be more emphasized compared to traditional elements

When asked about instruments used within worship services, most pastors indicated the use of worship bands (67%) and guitars (60%) describe their congregation “well” or “very well”. In contrast, surprisingly, more traditional elements such as choir (56%) or organ (61%) were reported as not used at all by over half of respondents. As modern elements become more widely used, traditional elements appear to have less emphasis in many worship services.



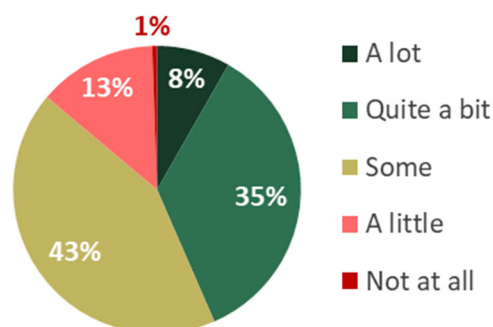
Mission and Programs

Modest engagement in evangelism and starting new locations

When asked about the congregation's regularly participating adults' involvement in recruiting new people, a small group (8%) of pastors expressed "a lot" of involvement, and another 35% expressed "quite a bit". In comparison, less than 15% expressed little or no involvement; however, a significant group (43%) expressed "some" involvement in this area.

To further support the theme of growth, in the last five years, almost 1 in 5 churches have opened another location (19%) and 1 in 3 helped start a new congregation (32%).

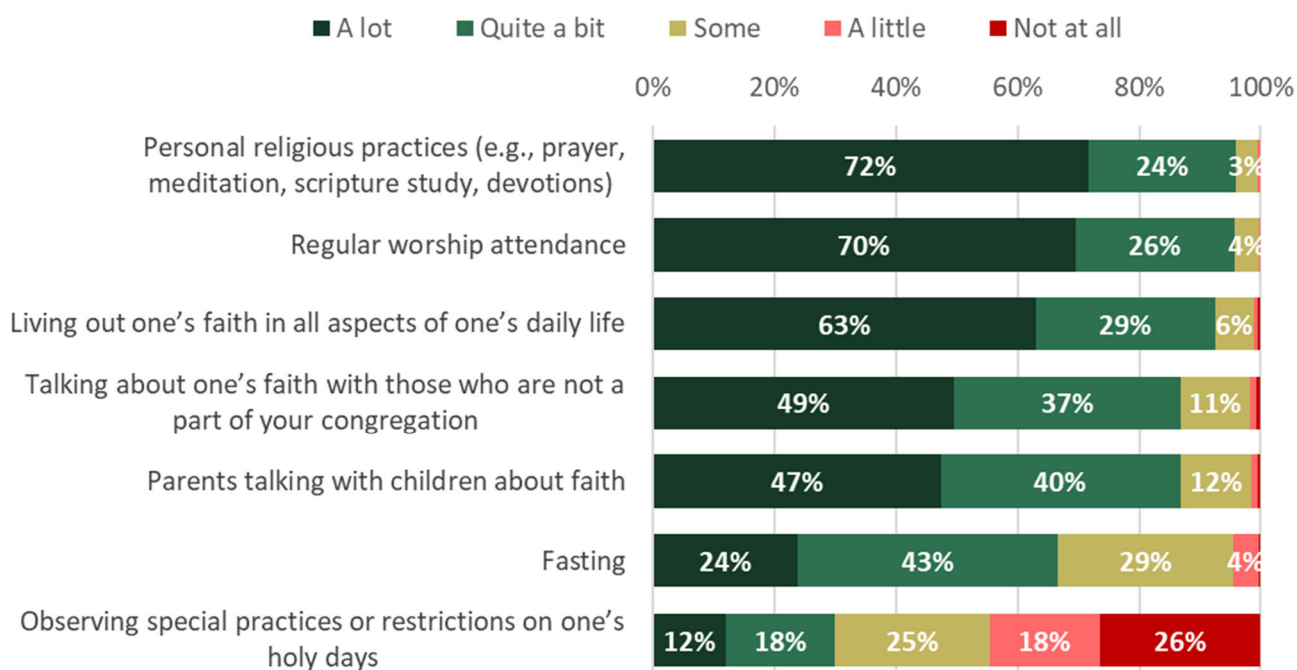
Involvement in Recruiting New People



Personal practices such as prayer, attendance, and witnessing are more emphasized than fasting

A strong majority of surveyed pastors expressed "quite a bit" or "a lot" of emphasis on personal and family religious practices, represented by the two green regions on the graph below. More than 90% expressed this level of emphasis on personal religious practices (96%), regular worship attendance (96%), and daily living out one's faith (96%). A slightly smaller majority expressed this same emphasis for talking about your faith to your children (87%) and to those outside of your congregation (87%). Maybe surprisingly, only two thirds (67%) of those surveyed expressed this same level of emphasis on fasting. As one might expect, the least emphasized area was related to practices or restrictions on holy days with only 30% of congregations expressing "quite a bit" or "a lot" of emphasis on this.

Congregational Emphasis



Mission and Programs (Continued)

Pastors express positive outlook and eagerness to grow, with some neutrality on serving community

The survey asked pastors to rate their agreement with various statements related to values and practices of the church. More than 90% agreed that their congregation is spiritually alive (93%), looking for new members (93%), thinking in new ways about the future (91%), and has a clear mission (91%). Additionally, more than 80% agreed that their church is striving to be diverse (87%), willing to meet new challenges (96%), good at incorporating new people (84%), and identifying new opportunities for ministry (82%). Pastors largely disagreed with statements about feeling threatened, struggling to maintain unity, considering merging, and prioritizing environmentalism. When asked whether the church is actively involved in the local community, 59% agreed with this statement, 12% disagreed, and 29% were neutral.

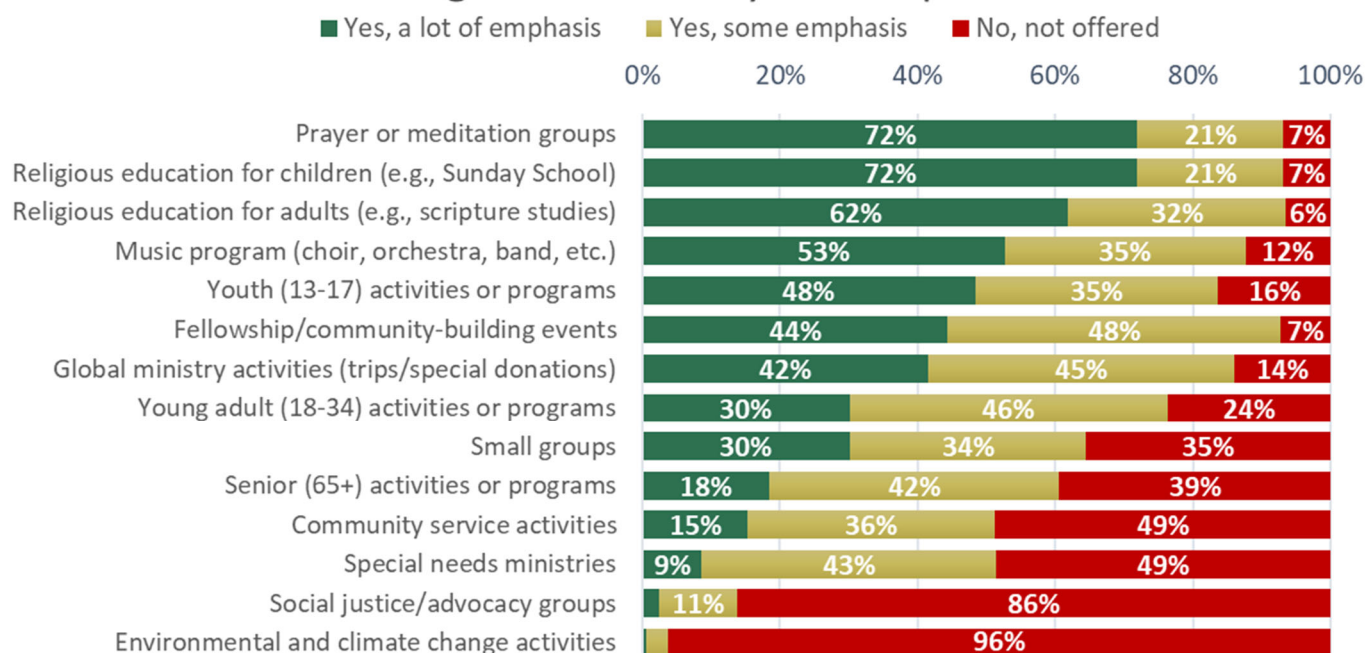
Church programs most often center around prayer, religious education, and music

Pastors indicated the availability of various church programs. Four programs were offered at almost all churches with more than half of churches indicating “a lot of emphasis” on these programs: prayer groups, religious education for children, religious education for adults, and music programs. Youth programs had the next largest share, but just under half of pastors expressing “a lot of emphasis” on this program.

Several more programs were active with less emphasis but still offered in most churches. Only a few did not offer fellowship events (7%), global ministry activities (14%), and young adult programs (24%). More than one-third of churches did not offer small groups (35%) or programs for senior citizens (39%).

Finally, a few of the programs in the survey were not commonly offered or emphasized by those surveyed. Nearly half of those surveyed (49%) do not have any community service activities or special needs ministries, and most churches do not offer advocacy groups (86%) or environmental activities (96%).

Program availability and emphasis



Leadership

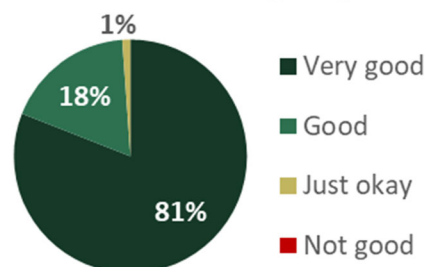
Survey indicates a strong congregation-pastor fit

Of those surveyed, nearly all pastors (99%) reported a positive fit between the senior pastor and the congregation. A strong majority (81%) described the fit as “very good” and another 18% as “good”. Only 1% described the fit as “just okay”, and no pastors indicated a fit that was “not good”.

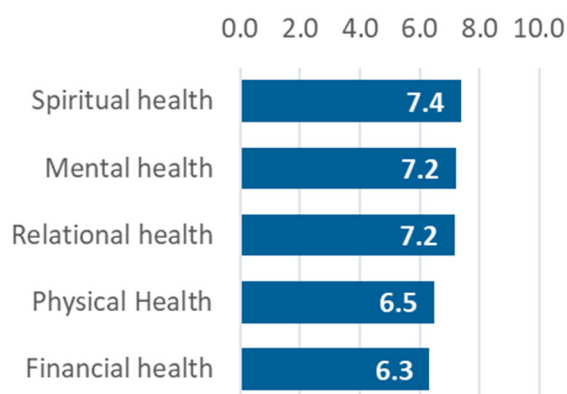
Prioritization of spiritual, mental, and relational health

Pastors were asked to score components of their personal health. On average, pastors reported higher well-being scores in their spiritual, mental, and relational health than in their physical and financial health. The survey asked pastors to rank these five elements of health on a scale of 0 to 10, and all averaged moderately strong ratings between 6.0 to 7.5. The average was higher than 7.0 for spiritual health (7.4), mental health (7.2), and relational health (7.2). Physical health (6.5) and financial health (6.3) scored relatively close but slightly lower than the other health components measured in the survey.

Fit between senior pastor and congregation



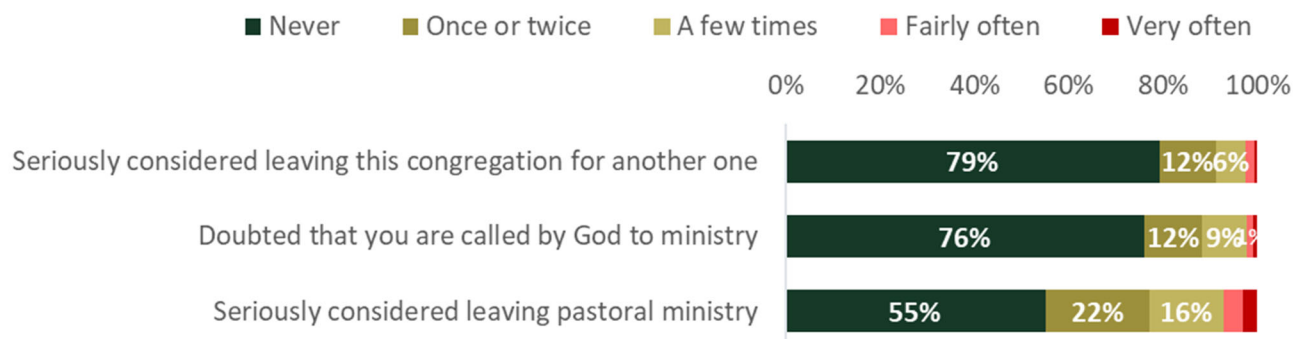
Average Health Score



Pastors show loyalty to congregations, confidence in calling, and little consideration to leave ministry

Three questions assessed how frequently pastors may have doubted their call or considered leaving their ministry in the past year. More than 75% of pastors never seriously considered leaving their congregation or doubted their call from God to ministry. A lesser majority (55%) never seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry; more than a third (38%) considered this but not often. Most surveyed pastors expressed loyalty and confidence to their ministry calling with few exceptions.

In the past year, how often have you:



Leadership (Continued)

Differences between pastors paid full-time and those not

Most surveyed pastors (62%) identified their role as paid, full-time employment. However, more than one third (35%) of this group worked at least 30 hours per week outside of the congregation. Pastors who were paid full-time were also most likely to indicate their outside employment was a choice. Still, just under half (47%) indicated their additional employment was need-based.

The remaining 38% of surveyed pastors identified their pastoral employment as paid part-time (13%), unpaid part-time (12%), or unpaid full-time (12%). For each of these groups, more than 70% indicated working outside of the congregation for at least 30 hours per week and cited circumstance as their motivation as opposed to choice.

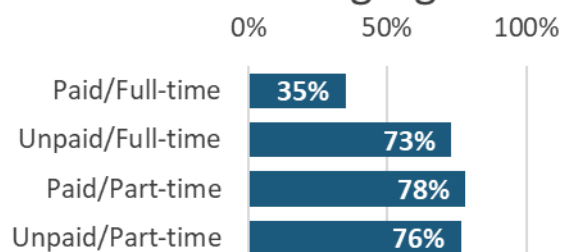
In summary, while most pastors describe their role as full-time paid employment, about a third of them continue to work additional jobs with motivation split nearly 50/50 between need and desire. Pastors that are not in a paid full-time ministry position commonly maintain additional employment due to financial circumstances. This survey did not ask about other household income, such as spousal or retirement income.

Church staffing grows, but pastors report more is needed

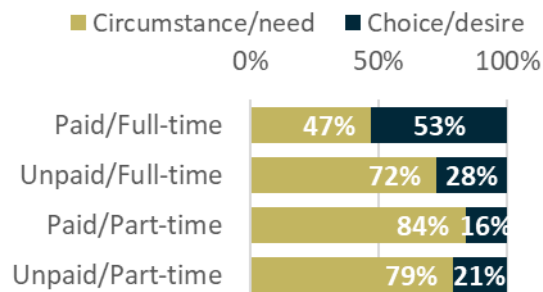
The survey asked pastors about changes to and adequacy of the church staff in recent years. Almost half of surveyed pastors (48%) indicated an increase in church staff since 2020. More than one third reported that the total number of church staff stayed the same: 25% without turnover and another 12% with turnover. Several (15%) indicated a decrease in staffing. In addition to changes, the survey asked whether the staff was adequate to meet the needs of the congregation. About half of pastors reported staffing is less than adequate for the needs of the congregation now (51%) vs. what they needed five years ago (45%). Only a few reported more staffing than needed now (6%) vs. five years ago (9%). A significant group (43% now, 45% five years ago) felt staffing was “just about right”.

	Part-time	Full-time	
Paid	13%	62%	75%
Unpaid	12%	12%	25%
	26%	74%	

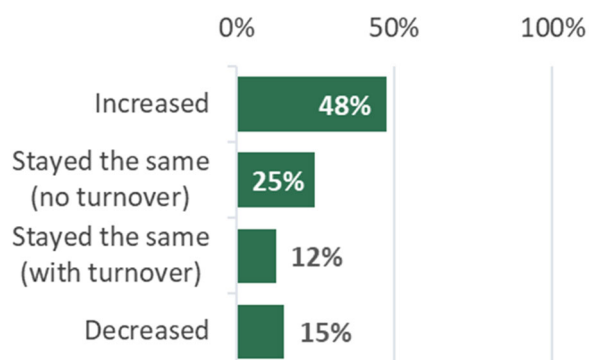
Pastors working 30+ hours outside of congregation



Motivation for working outside of congregation



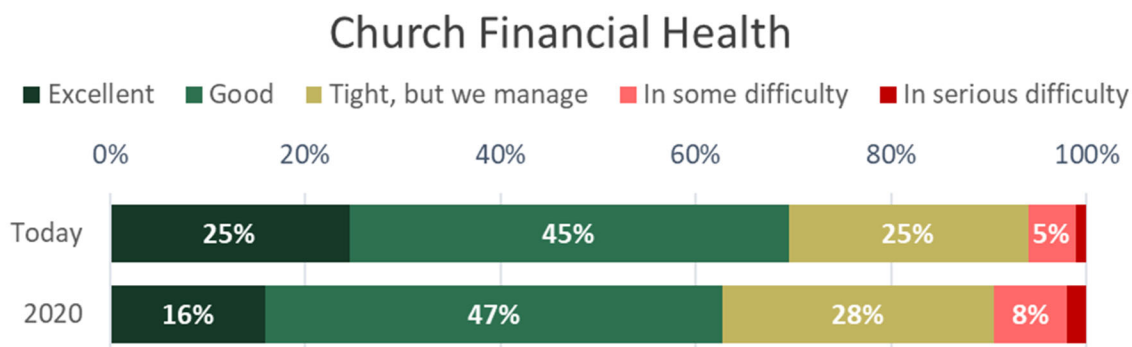
Change in church staff since 2020



Finances

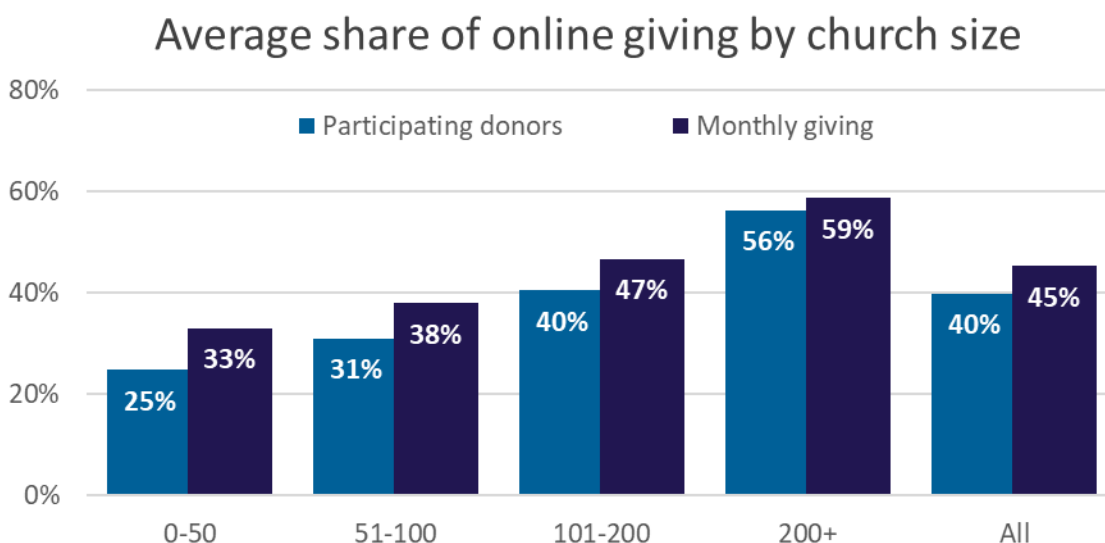
Most churches maintain financial stability and show improvement from 2020 conditions

Almost 70% of pastors described their congregation's financial health as "good" or "excellent" today (69%). This represents an increase from 63% of pastors reporting the same condition in 2020. Still nearly a quarter of pastors expressed things are "tight, but we manage". About 6% of pastors described their church's financial health in "some" or "serious difficulty" today, compared to 10% in 2020. Overall, responses show that the majority of churches are financially healthy, even more so from recent years.



Online donations are fairly common, especially among larger churches

Surveyed pastors reported an average of 40% of participant donations that were received online, accounting for 45% of regular monthly contributions. Larger churches may rely more heavily on digital giving platforms. For example, churches with 50 or fewer attendees averaged 25% of donors giving online compared to 56% in churches of 200 or more attendees, a difference of 31%. Further, churches with 50 or fewer attendees averaged 33% of all donations through online giving compared to 59% of donations in churches of 200 or more attendees, a difference of 26%.



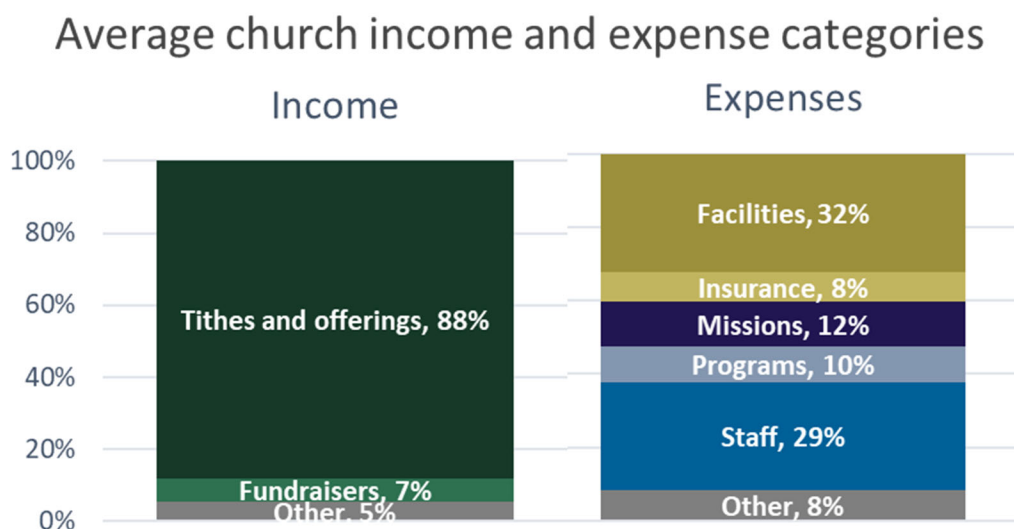
Finances (Continued)

Budget categories reflect faithful giving of donors and a balanced management of expenses

The survey asked pastors to provide budget information, including various income and expense categories. Overall, average responses resemble recommendations for healthy churches from [The Stewardship Group](#).

Church income is predominantly driven by participant donations. Nearly all (88%) income was directly from tithes and offerings. Smaller portions of the income were derived from fundraisers (7%) or other sources (5%), including capital campaign, tuition, rental, investment and endowment incomes.

On the expense side, the majority of costs are associated with the physical building and staff. Surveyed churches averaged 32% on facilities, which includes all building and operations costs (e.g. utilities and mortgage), plus an additional 8% on insurance. Churches reported an average of 29% for total staff salaries and benefits. To conduct regular activities, churches averaged 10% of expenses for program support and materials, another 12% for missions and benevolence, and 8% for all other expenditures.



Pastors commonly report increasing costs of insurance, but most maintain the same provider

Majority of churches (84%) noted higher insurance costs over the last five years, with more than half (54%) who reported costs have “increased a lot”. Of the pastors surveyed, only 1% reported a decrease in insurance costs, and 11% indicated costs were about the same. Another 4% selected that they do not have insurance. Despite the common reports of increasing costs, only 3 in 10 surveyed churches reported a change in providers in the last five years. Of this group that changed providers, half (50%) indicated the switch due to price changes, and another 40% indicated their previous coverage was dropped.

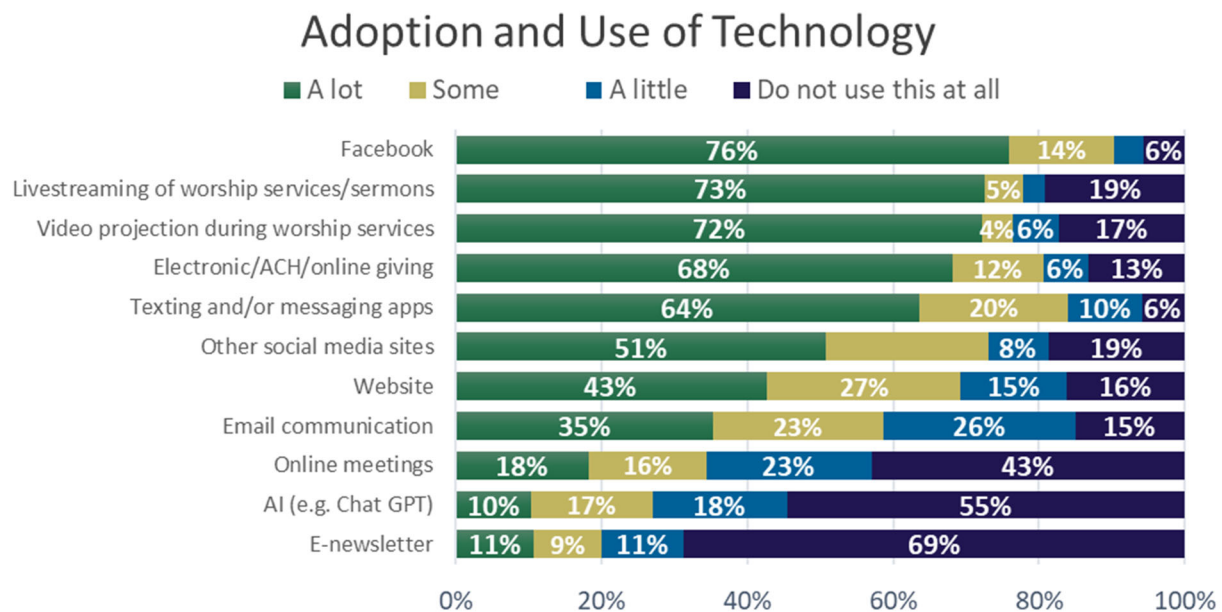
Relatively rare for churches to have an endowment; but those with one report stable draw rates

A very small number (2%) of churches surveyed have an endowment. Of those with an endowment, pastors reported an annual draw rate of 5% or less in the last year, which has remained about the same over the last five years for most churches.

Technology & The Future

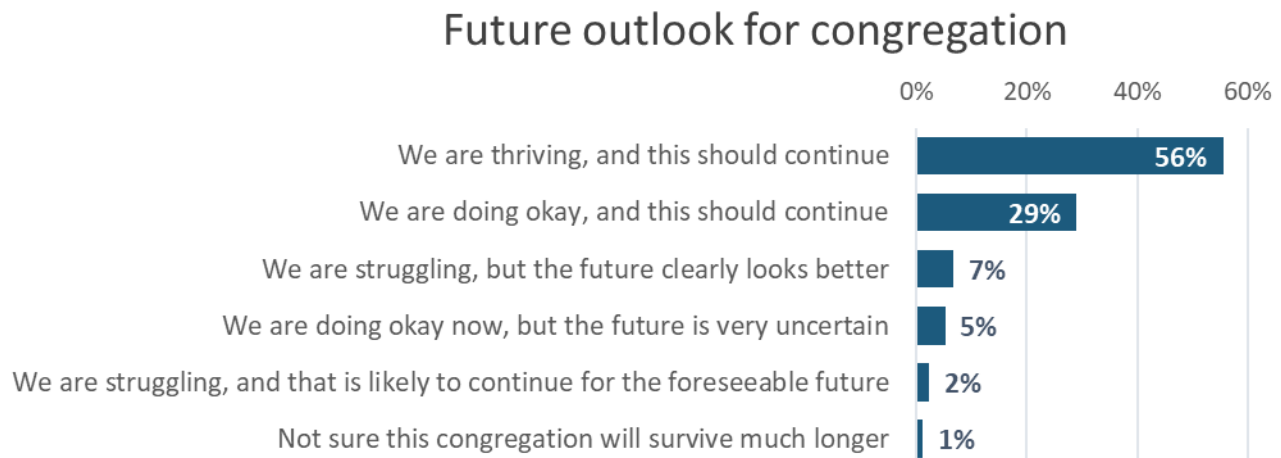
Congregations typically use technology, particularly tools that enhance engagement in services

Most congregations used most technology included in this survey, with two exceptions. More than half of those surveyed do not use AI (55%) and e-newsletters (69%). Video projection (72%), livestreaming services (73%), and Facebook (76%) were the three most heavily used forms of technology.



Pastors expressed optimism regarding the future outlook for their congregations

Surveyed pastors were asked to select one statement that best describes their sense of the congregation's future. Most (90%) expressed a positive outlook. More than half felt their church was "thriving and this should continue" with another 29% expressing they were "doing okay and this should continue". In addition to this, another 7% admitted they were "struggling, but the future looks better". Less than 10% selected a statement that expressed uncertainty or pessimism about the future of the congregation.



Appendix A: Respondent demographics

This survey received 486 responses from UPCI churches in the US and Canada. This sample includes participation from 54 of 58 districts across North America. A graph of participation by district is included on the next page.

This appendix includes demographics of the senior pastor. Respondents in the US survey provided a variety of demographic factors for the senior pastor including age, gender, and ethnicity.

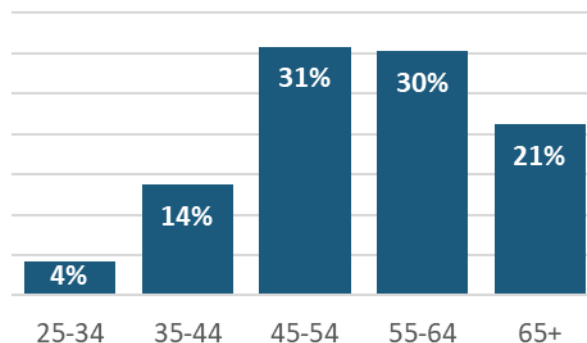
Nearly all senior pastors in this survey were male (99%); only 1% of the surveyed senior pastors were female.

The median age of the lead pastor responding to this survey was age 55. About half of pastors (51%) were age 55 or older, and conversely about half (49%) were age 54 or younger. This survey did not include any pastors under the age of 25.

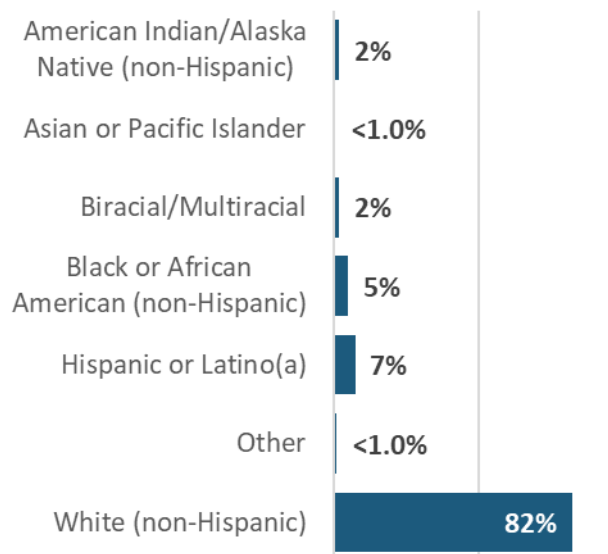
Majority (82%) of senior pastors responding to this survey identified as White, non-Hispanic. Hispanic (7%) and Black or African American (5%) pastors represent the largest minority groups and appear to be under-represented in this survey. A small number of senior pastors identified as biracial or multiracial (2%), American Indian or Alaska Native (2%), Asian or Pacific Island (< 1%) or other (<1%). In comparison to the demographics of all pastors in North America, this survey likely over-represented White pastors and underrepresented Black and Hispanic pastors.

The US and Canadian surveys were offered in a minimum of three languages: English, Spanish, and French. Nearly all respondents (99.6%) chose to complete the survey in English. Less than one percent completed the survey in Spanish (0.2%) or French (0.2%).

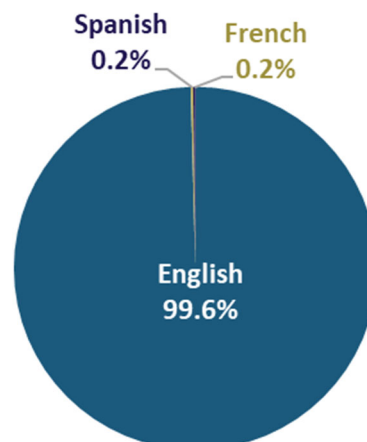
Pastor Age



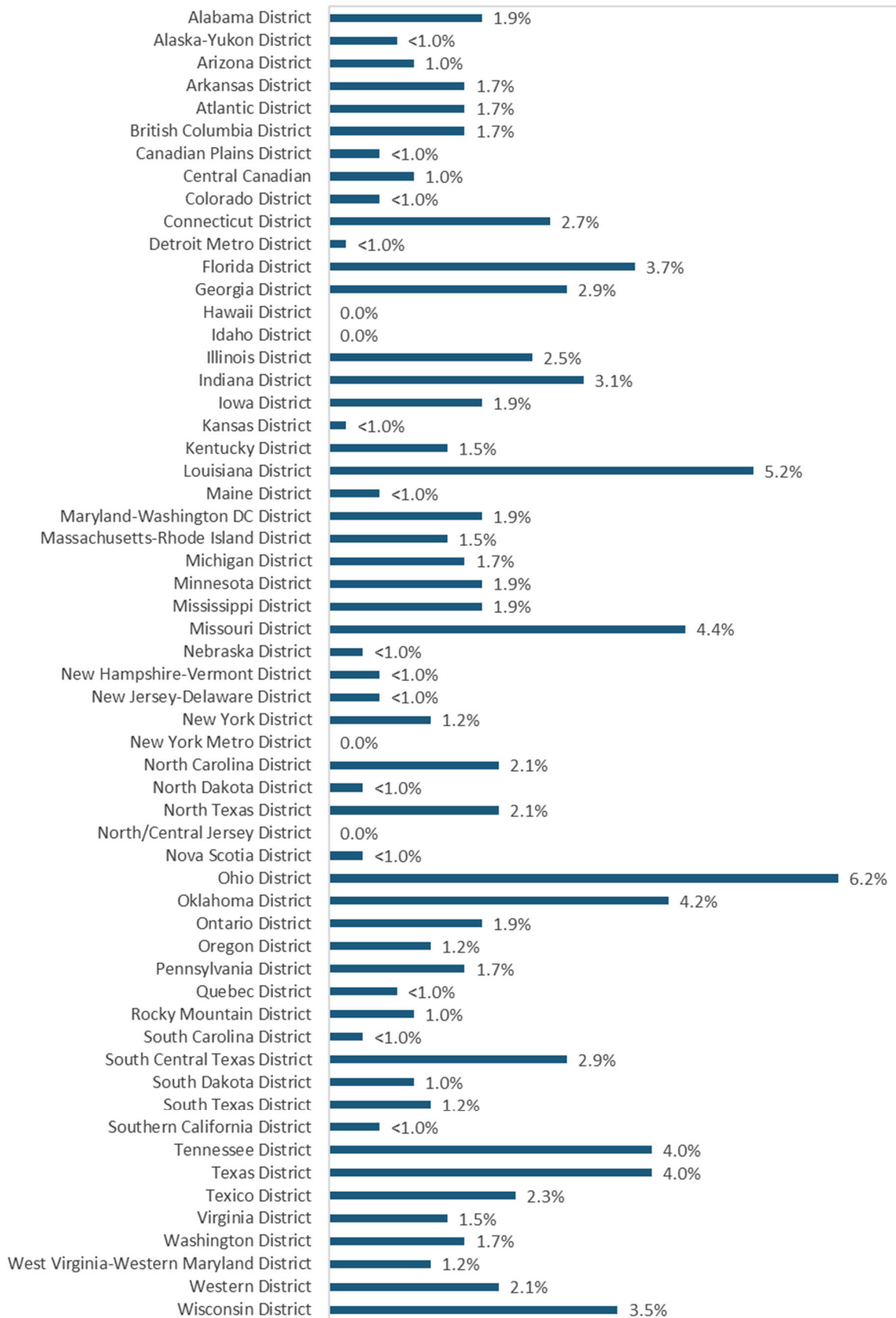
Pastor Race/Ethnicity



Respondent survey language



Respondents by District



Appendix B: Methodology

- i. In 2025, the UPCI participated in a national survey of congregations led by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research (HIRR). This survey is a project of Faith Communities Today (FACT) and The Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC) National Research. HIRR designed the survey questions, including translation into 6 languages, and provided a unique link for the UPCI Office of Research & Development to collect anonymous responses from US-based congregations. The UPCI received permission from HIRR to use the same instrument to survey Canadian-based congregations during the same period. The survey was distributed via email to all senior pastors of active self-governing churches via the General Superintendent's newsletter and promoted at the 2025 UPCI General Conference. This report reflects the combined results of UPCI congregations in the US and Canada. Results of all participating denominations in the 2025 national survey of US congregations is published online at www.covidreligionresearch.org/.
- ii. The sample of pastors in this survey appears to under-represent Black and Hispanic pastors, in comparison to the proportion of active pastors in Church Records at UPCI World Headquarters. In the survey, approximately 7% of surveyed pastors identified as Hispanic, compared to about 12% of all active pastors. Similarly, 5% of surveyed pastors identified as Black or African American, compared to about 7% of all active pastors.
- iii. The survey asked pastors to estimate the number of attendees into eight racial and ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic); Asian (non-Hispanic); Black or African American, Non-Hispanic; Hispanic or Latino(a); Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic); White, Non-Hispanic; Biracial/Multiracial; and Other. Some labels were adjusted for the narrative. For example, "Native people groups" is used to refer to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and First Nations (in the context of Canadian congregations). Some labels were shortened from the survey language to simplify the summary text. For example, "Hispanic" refers to Hispanic or Latino(a) and "Black" refers to Black or African Americans in the context of this document. Hispanics may be of any race.
- iv. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.