

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Summary of Results (45 Questions):

The survey has 146 responses, 73 % of our membership. 74% of the respondents have been affiliated with FP for 6 yrs or more. 83% are between the ages of 40 and 70, and 66% female. 16% of the respondents are not heterosexual. 76% are married, and 39% attend without a partner. 85 households report dependent children. 96% identify Caucasian as their primary ethnicity. 93 % have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 69% of responding households report annual incomes >\$100K. The median pledge is \$1000-2000, with 68% reporting a pledge less than \$2000. The most common religious affiliations prior to joining a UU church were Catholic (37%) and Protestant Christian (31%). 51% of respondents attend church 3 or more times per month, while 90% have not attended any district or denominational meetings in the last 12 months.

The most common reasons for attending FPM are celebrating common values, community, and fellowship, followed by the minister and intellectual stimulation. The most common activities in which we participate are coffee hour, committee work, and social activities. 78% support growing the congregation, while 22% were neutral on this. Buddhism, Humanism, and Protestant Christianity are most often cited as faith traditions important to us, as well as a sizable minority who cite earth-centered spirituality. 67% of us feel that the word "God" has meaning, and 87% are fine with God language in sermons and conversations. Our most commonly shared religious belief is that the interconnectedness of all things grounds us in our spiritual lives. We engage in a wide variety of spiritual practices, including prayer, meditation, yoga, and engaging with the natural and creative world.

The most important elements of Sunday worship are felt to be the sermon, by 86%, followed by multicultural sensitivity and the choir. Communion is deemed unimportant by 60% of the congregation, significantly more than any other element. The most valuable sermon topics center on coping with life, family concerns, spiritual growth, and values and perspectives on social issues. Diversity in perspective is considered important to many congregants.

Music in general is considered a vital part of FPM life, and the choir is valued as a chief contributor. However, many members seek a more diverse, participatory musical experience that complements and strengthens the worship theme, with less

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

emphasis on performance. There is a strong desire to incorporate nontraditional music and draw on the rich resource of talent in our congregation as a way to further engage members in worship.

The predominant style of minister sought by the congregation is pastor, the person who, by virtue of their spiritual and moral gifts, becomes an influential counselor to individuals and to a strong lay leadership. Prophet and facilitator are equally in second place, and steward/city manager is a very distant last place. The ministerial function we prioritize most is that of spiritual leader, who prepares and leads worship and celebrations. Our second priority is intellectual leader, who challenges and stimulates the thinking of the congregation. We least require the minister to be a role model, though it was noted by many that all the choices are important. Empathy, character, and professional competence are the screening criteria we would apply most consistently to candidates.

Far above all other priorities, we'd like our next minister to foster a sense of fellowship and community within the church as well as present stimulating and challenging worship services. We show a slight preference for a minister who is female, and some unease with a minister who is politically conservative (64%) or an atheist (52%).

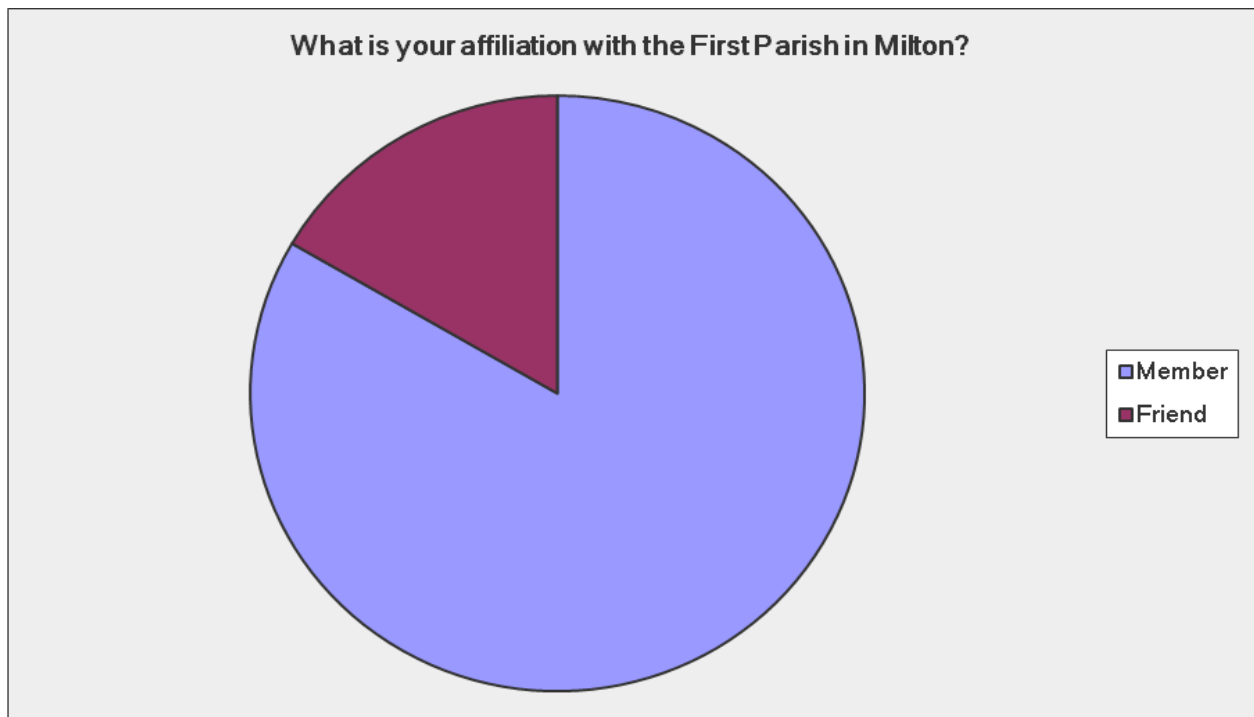
The most common reason folks start coming to FPM is that they seek a spiritual home, followed closely by religious education and a sense of being part of a community. By far (85%), our community is considered the most valuable strength we possess and wish to sustain in the immediate future. For next steps, we'd most (51%) like to see social action re-visioned and revamped in a way to make it accessible to the largest proportion of the congregation and most impactful on the community. There is difference of opinion on how to accomplish this, with some suggesting we need to concentrate on taking care of each other before we can expand outward, while others feel that more risk-taking might propel the congregation out of a perceived inertia. Secondary priorities include being a beacon/promoting UU in the larger community, growing our membership, and strengthening our financial position. We're most concerned about ongoing strain regarding finances and how to sustain our membership. Lay leadership burnout and inability to distribute the work of congregational life are mentioned often as worries.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Our hoped-for profile of the next minister is quite ambitious, and involves a person with a strong intellect, who inspires through excellent communication skills, yet has deep empathy and personal warmth. A sense of humor and humility are also deemed important--a person who can become “one of us,” yet can draw us out to be our best selves with honesty and integrity.

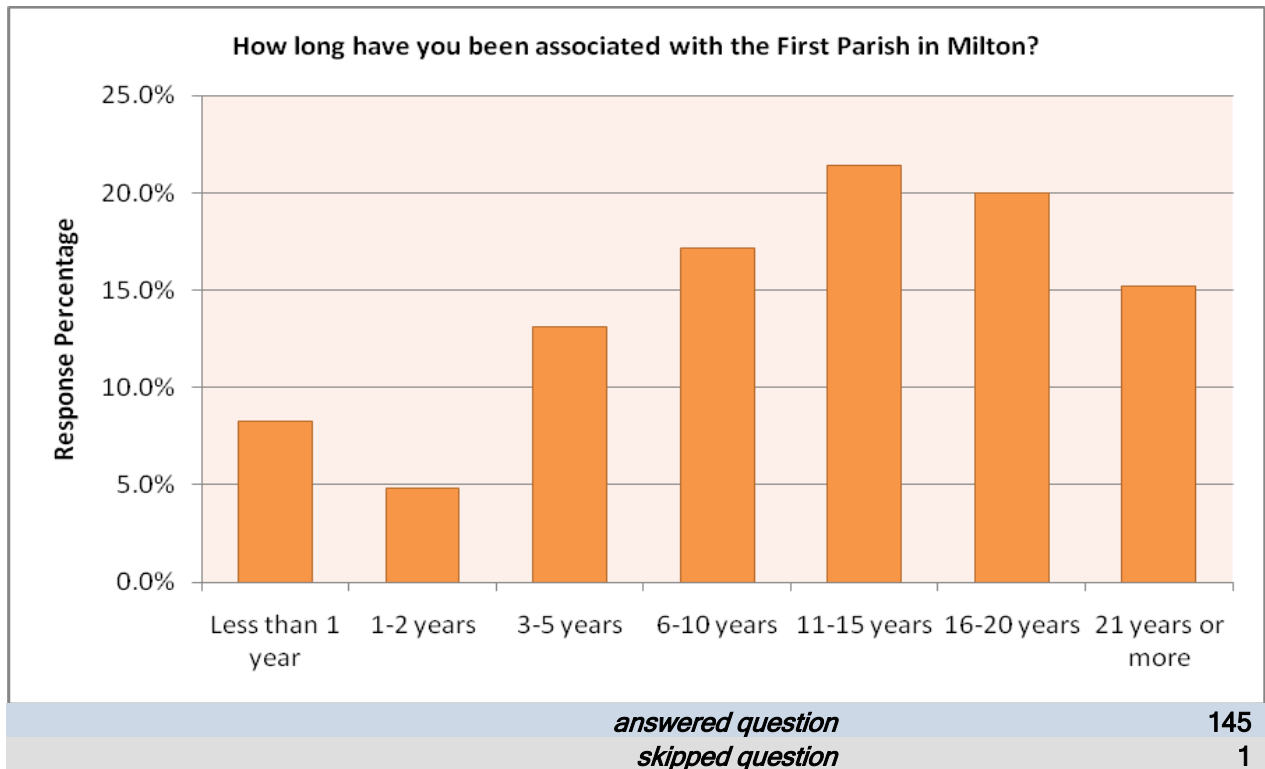
Detailed Results:

Question 1- Affiliation with First Parish

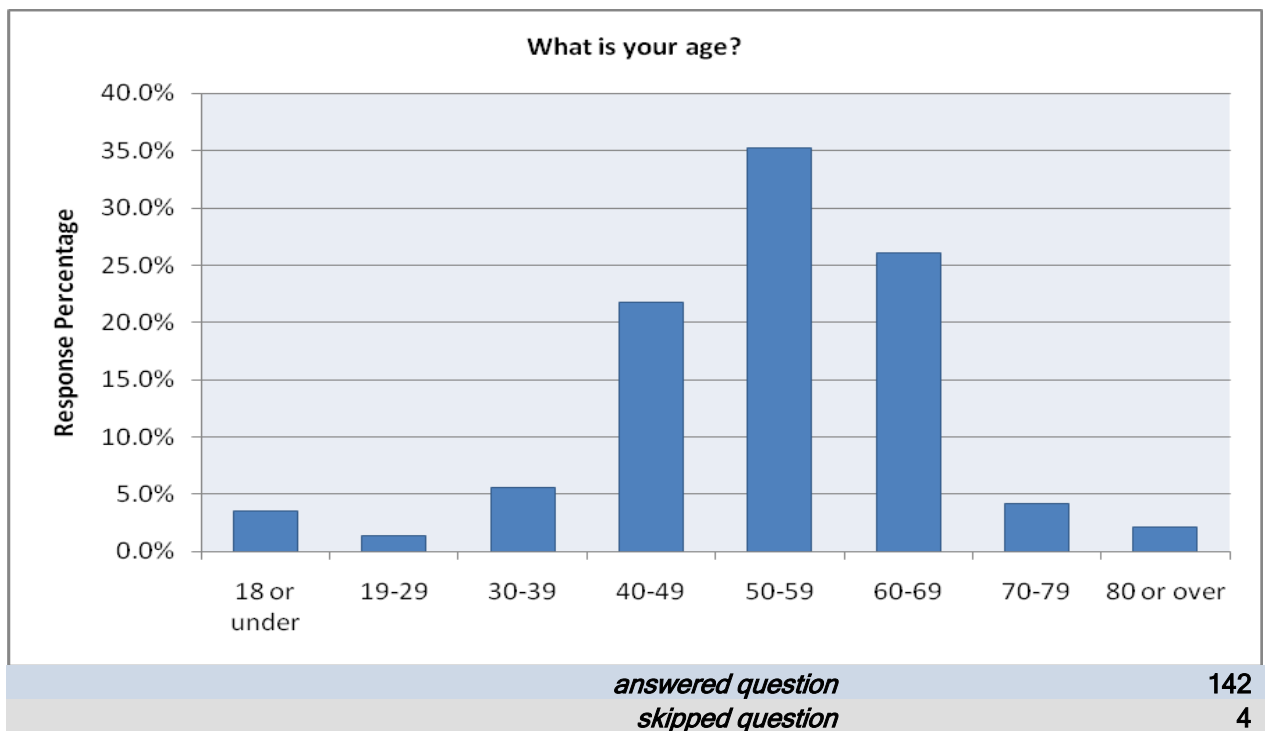


What is your affiliation with the First Parish in Milton?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Member	83.4%	121
Friend	16.6%	24
<i>answered question</i>		145
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Question 2 - Length of Association of Respondents



Question 3 – Age of Respondents



First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

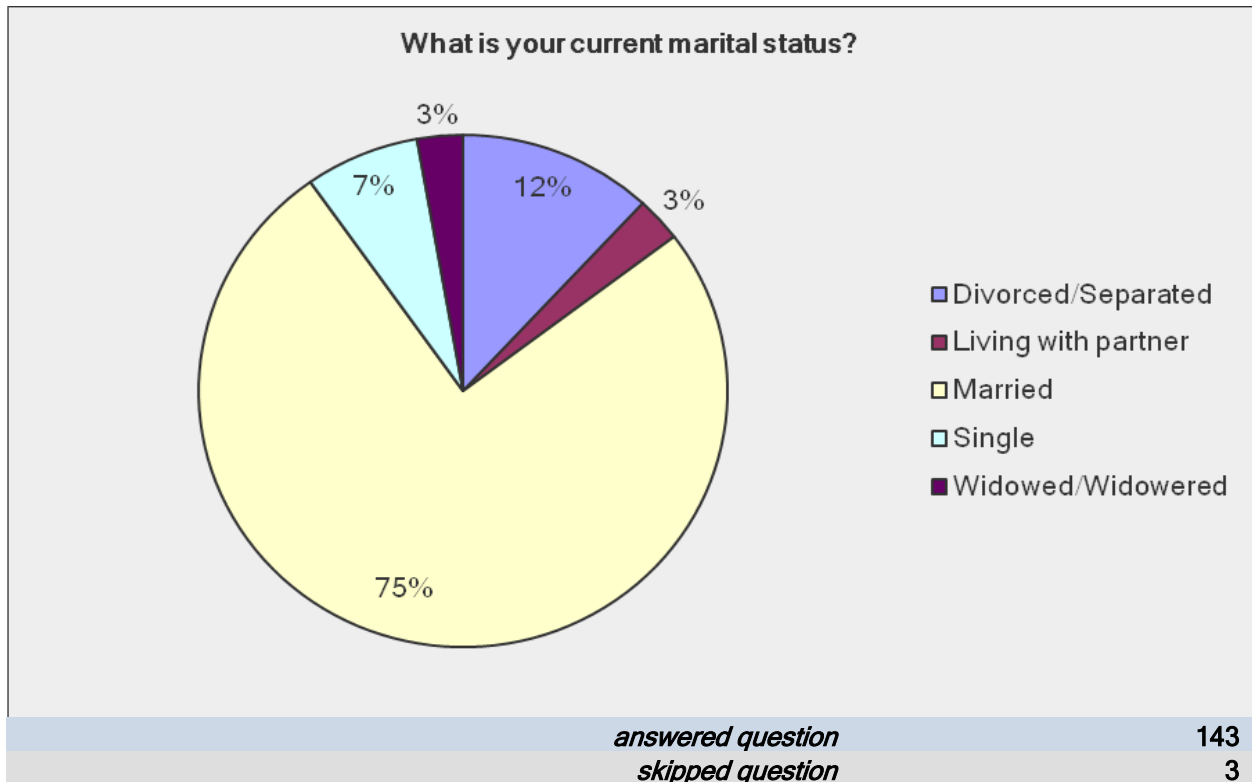
Question 4 - Gender of Respondents

What is your gender?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	35.2%	51
Female	63.4%	92
Transgender	1.4%	2
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		145
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Question 5 – Sexual Orientation of Respondents

What is your sexual orientation?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Bisexual	7.6%	11
Heterosexual	84.0%	121
Homosexual	8.3%	12
Other		1
(please specify):	<i>does anybody still say homosexual?</i>	
<i>answered question</i>		144
<i>skipped question</i>		2

Question 6 – Marital Status of Respondents



Question 7 – Affiliation of Respondents' Spouse

Is your spouse/partner affiliated with the congregation?

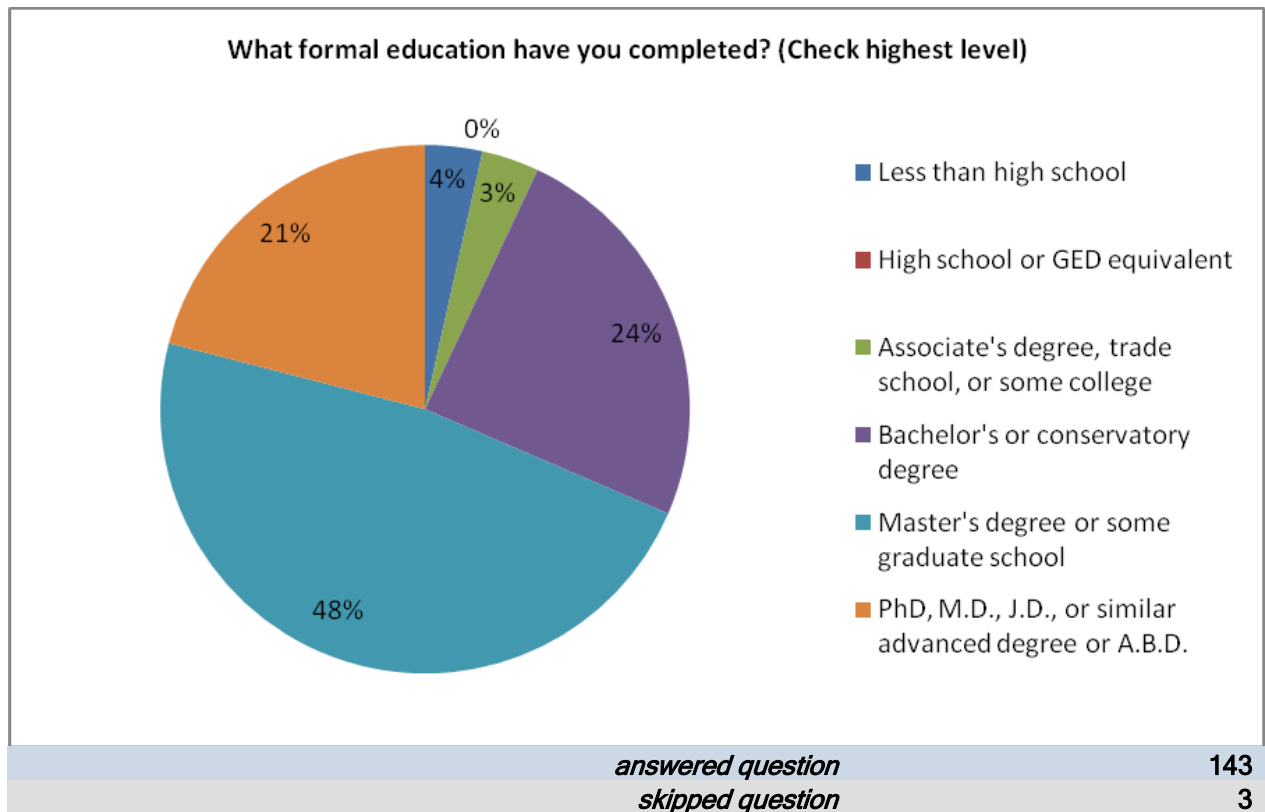
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	61.5%	88
No	25.9%	37
Not applicable	12.6%	18
<i>answered question</i>		143
<i>skipped question</i>		3

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Question 8 – Self-Reported Ethnic or Racial Background of Respondents

What is your ethnic/racial background?			
Answer Options	Primary ethnicity	Other ethnicities	Response Count
African American/Black	1	2	3
American Indian/ Native	1	2	3
Asian	1	0	1
Caucasian	137	1	138
Hispanic/Latino	2	2	4
Pacific Islander	0	0	0
South Asian/Indian	0	0	0
Other			1
(please specify):			Cape Verdean
			<i>answered question</i> 143
			<i>skipped question</i> 3

Question 9 – Level of Education of Respondents



First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Question 10 – Children (One Respondent per Family)

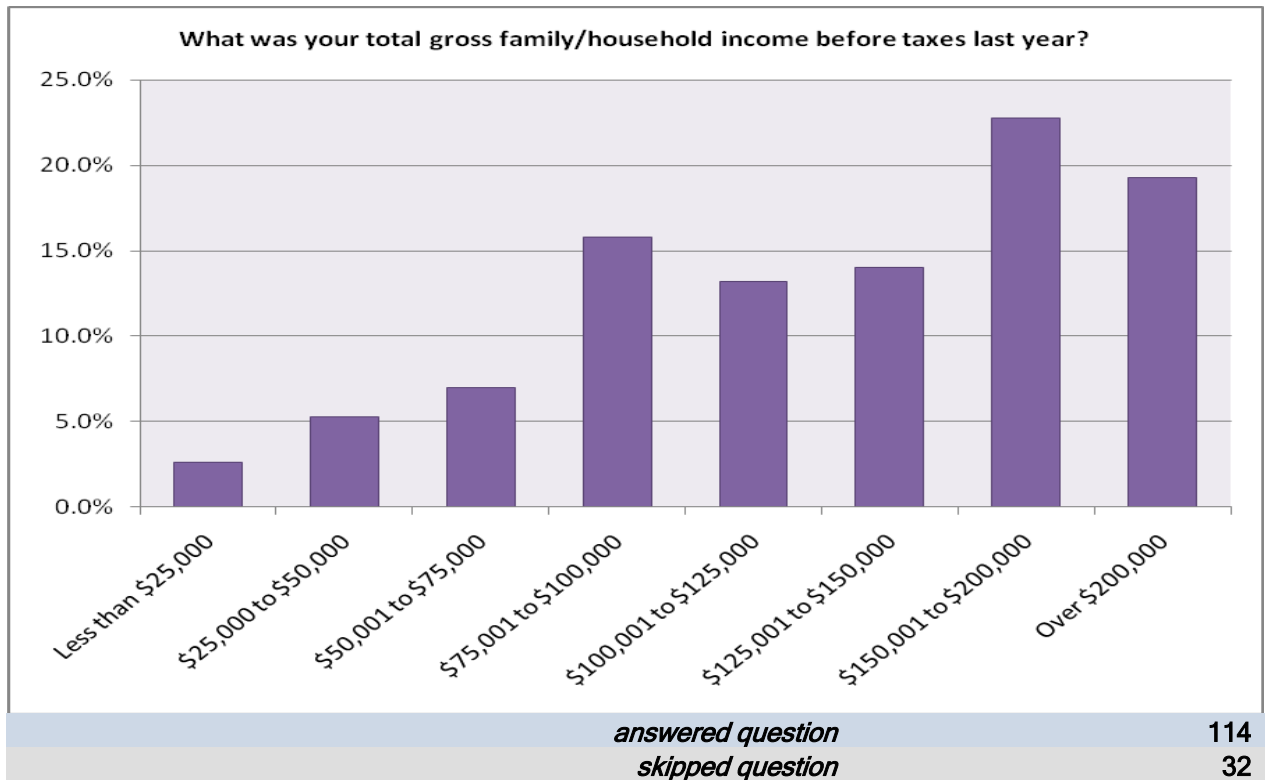
If you have dependent children, please indicate how many in each group.

Number								
Answer Options	0	1	2	3	4	5	More than 5	Response Count
Preschool	8	5	1	1	0	0	0	15
K-3	8	11	2	0	0	0	0	21
4-6	8	15	1	0	0	0	0	24
7-8	8	17	0	0	0	0	0	25
9-12	8	25	7	0	0	0	0	40
College	9	17	10	0	0	0	0	36

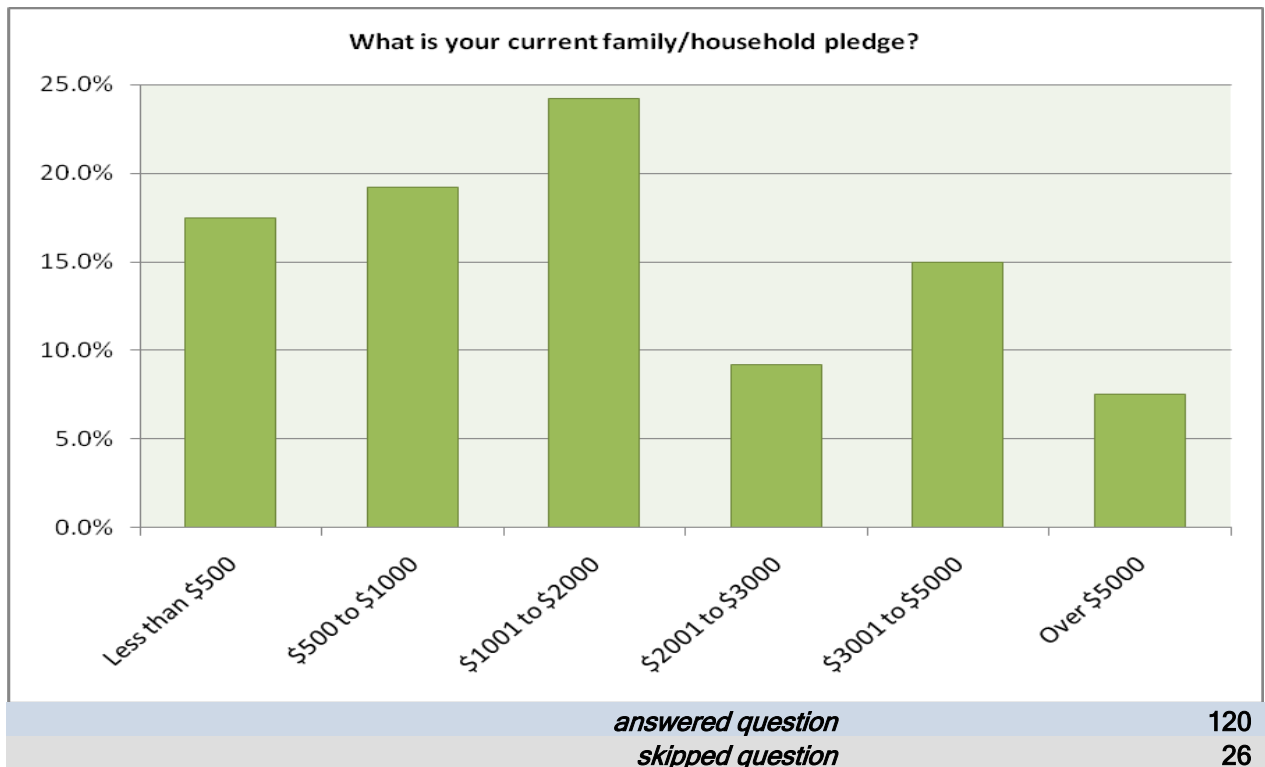
Number in R.E. at church								
Answer Options	0	1	2	3	4	5	More than 5	Response Count
Preschool	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	9
K-3	4	8	2	0	0	0	0	14
4-6	4	13	0	0	0	0	0	17
7-8	3	11	0	0	0	0	0	14
9-12	7	14	4	0	0	0	0	25
College	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8

								Question Totals
							<i>answered question</i>	85
							<i>skipped question</i>	61

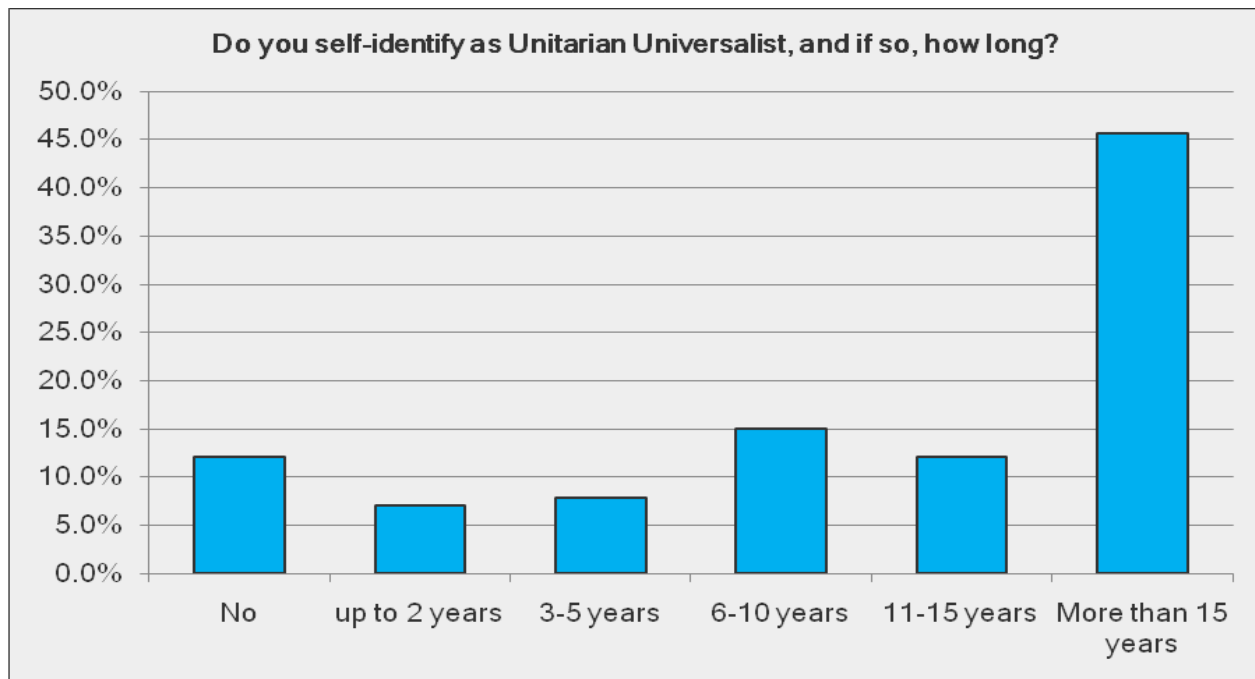
Question 11 – Household Income (One Respondent per Family)



Question 12– Household Pledge (One Respondent per Family)



Questions 13 and 14 – UU Affiliation of Respondents

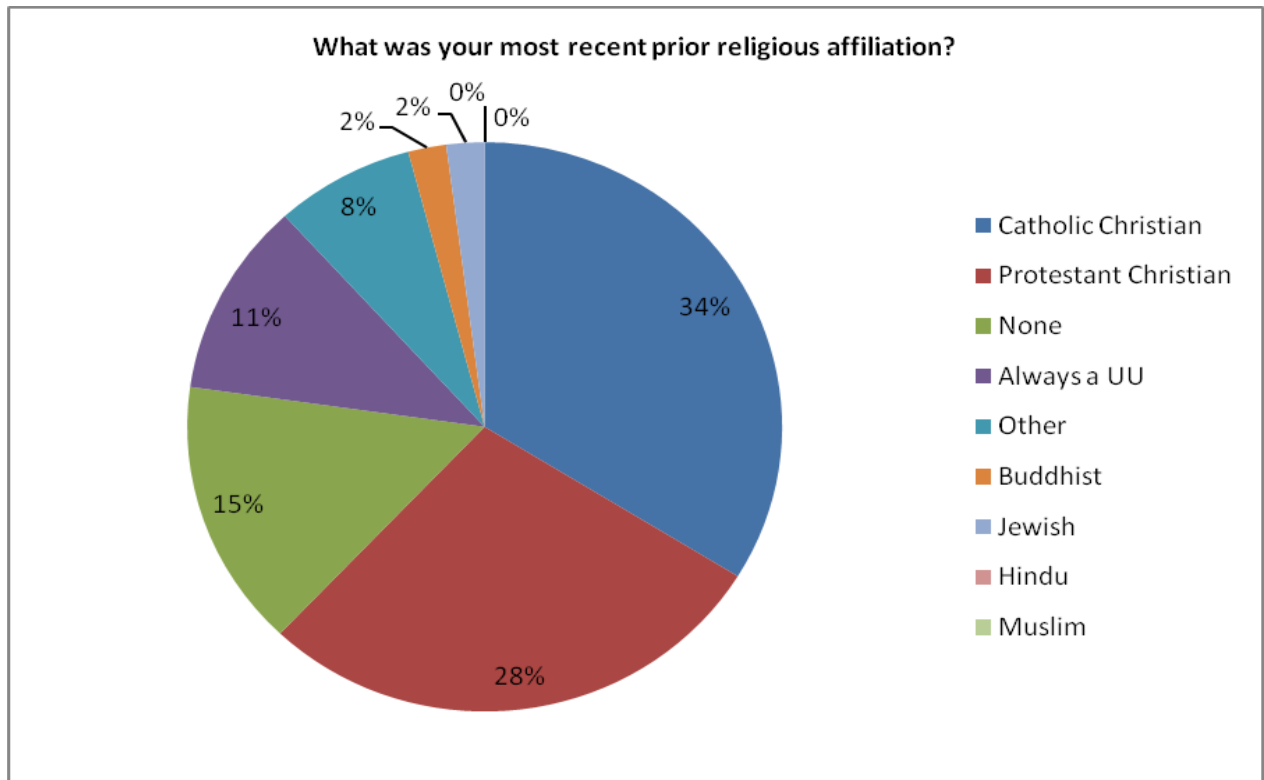


<i>answered question</i>	140
<i>skipped question</i>	6

If you do not consider yourself a Unitarian Universalist, would you please let us know why?

1. In beginning stages of learning about UU
2. I am torn between it and my protestant christian affiliation. I would identify more with UU if it were the more traditional UU.
3. I am still learning what that means.
4. I'm not sure yet.
5. I still am trying to figure it out. I have been hurt by religion in the past. It is confusing.
6. I have found my path--Soto Zen Buddhism. I have recently joined the UU congregation in Milton so that my children may get religious education there.
7. Was not raised in it and do not identify with the name
8. In process of determining the right path for our family
9. Pagan
10. Identify as Christian. UU is vague and most people I talk to don't know what it is- and I don't know an easy way to explain it
11. Haven't become a member yet, still exploring this identity
12. UU with a leaning toward Buddhism and Secular Humanism.
13. Only just started exploring this UU church to see if it is a fit for our family
14. Community
15. Christian UU
16. Because I'm not.
17. still considering my religious
18. I identify as UU with a Buddhist toolkit and sensibility
19. I don't think that religion is something that should identify who you are.
20. Considering changing denomination but have not committed.
21. In part because of my Jewish ethnicity I find it difficult to fully identify with another religious denomination, though I do not self identify as Jewish religiously, only would never deny my Jewish ethnicity.
22. n/a

Question 15 – Prior Religious Affiliations of Respondents



answered question

134

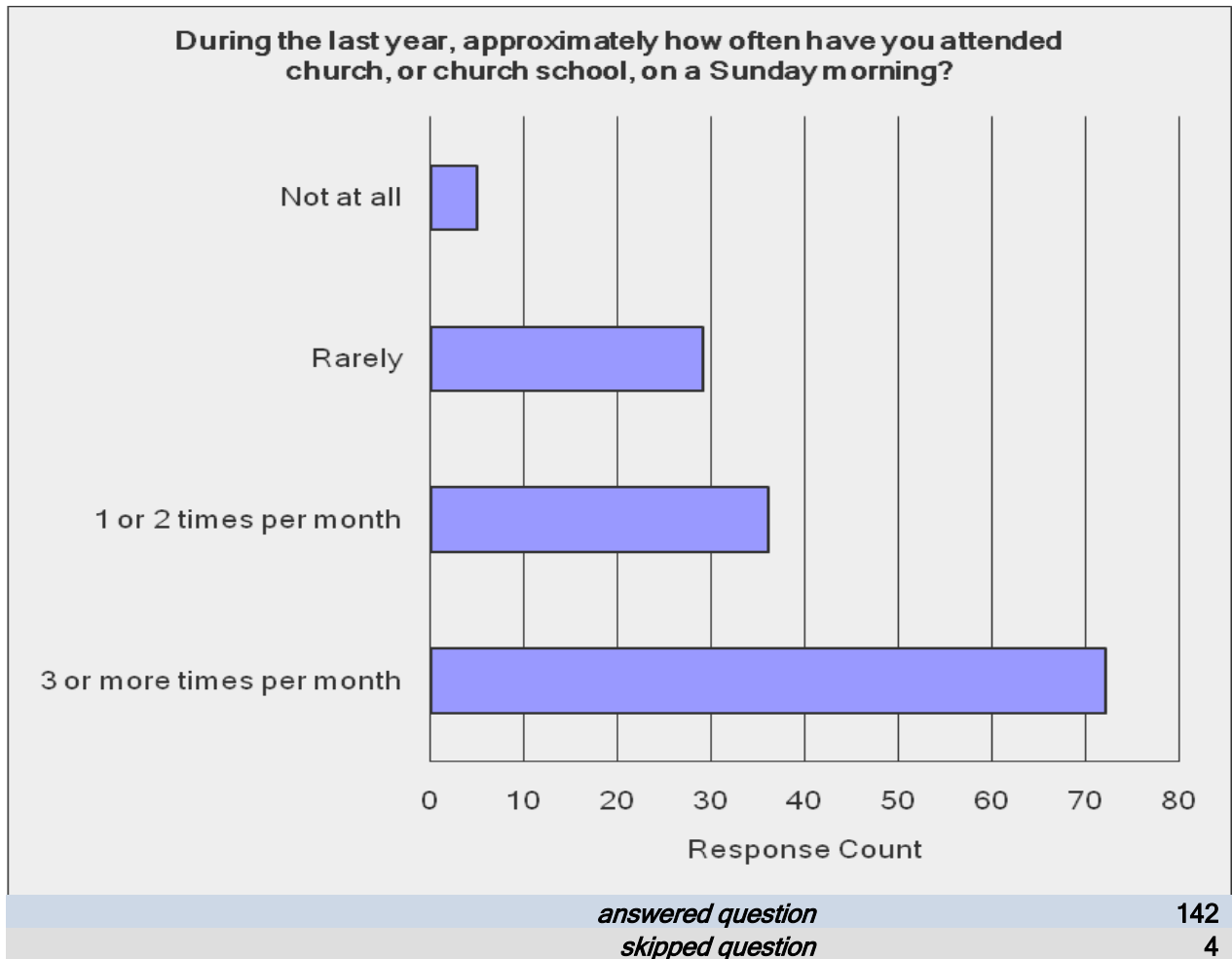
skipped question

12

Other (please Specify):

- Episcopal (2)
- Greek Orthodox
- Humanist; Zen; raised Congo and UU
- Quaker
- Pagan
- I became at 30. No commitment prior.
- Atheist
- Wiccan
- Jewish atheist
- Jewish and Protestant

Question 16 – Self-reported Church Attendance by Respondents

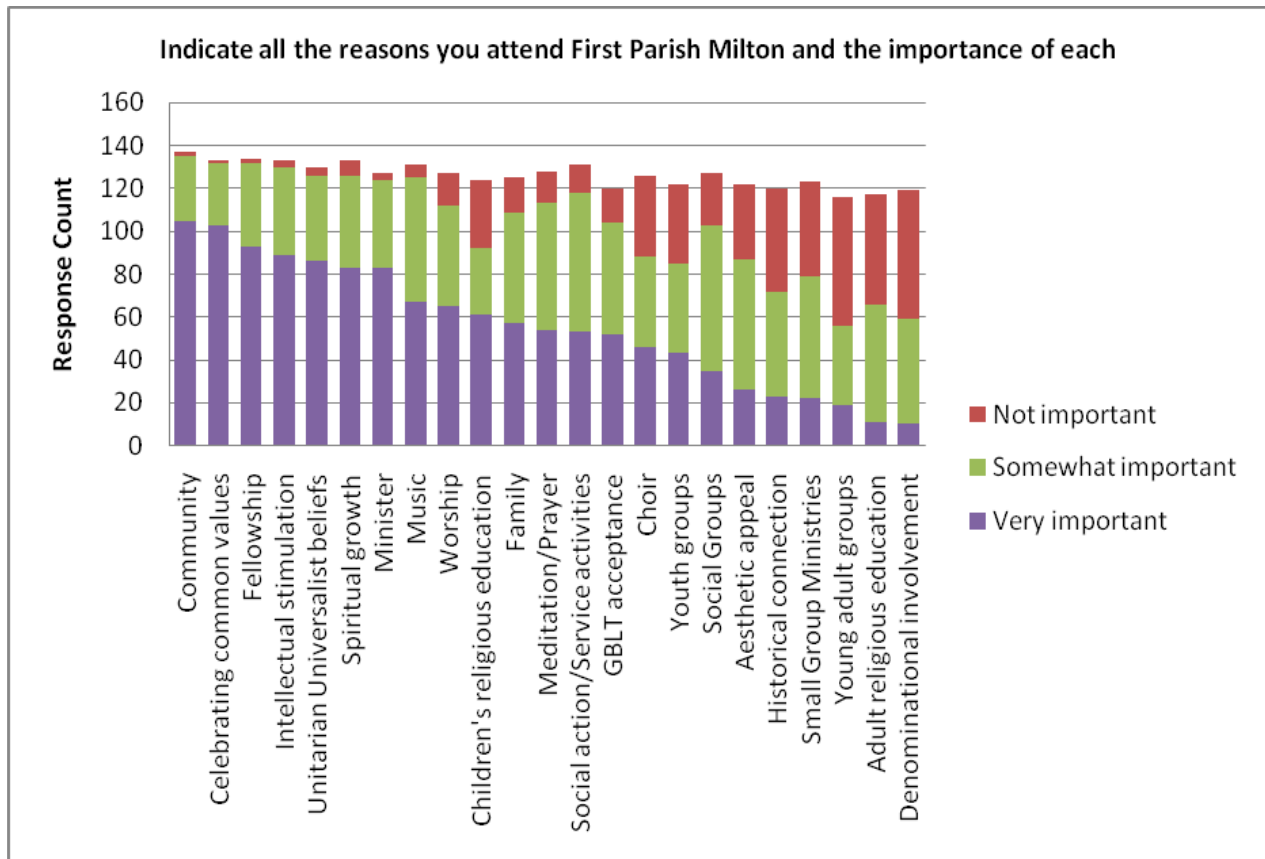


First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Question 17 – UU Meetings Attended by Respondents

In the past 12 months, have you attended any cluster, district, or denominational meetings or trainings (General Assembly, District Assembly, etc.)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No	90.8%	129
Yes (see below)	9.2%	13
List meetings and/or trainings you attended:		
1	RE training (2)	
2	Leap of Faith; GA and leadership training	
3	Meeting in home of?	
4	Leap Of Faith	
5	General Assembly	
6	General Assembly	
7	Conversation and workshop on Strategy; New England Region Training for Peer Consultants; Mass Bay District Annual Meeting; District Board Meetings; and probably some other things	
8	district stewardship training	
9	District-level workshops	
10	I have attended district meetings in the past.	
11	Workshops on economic diversity, church leadership and mid sized churches	
	<i>answered question</i>	142
	<i>skipped question</i>	4

Question 18 – Reasons Why Respondents Attend Church



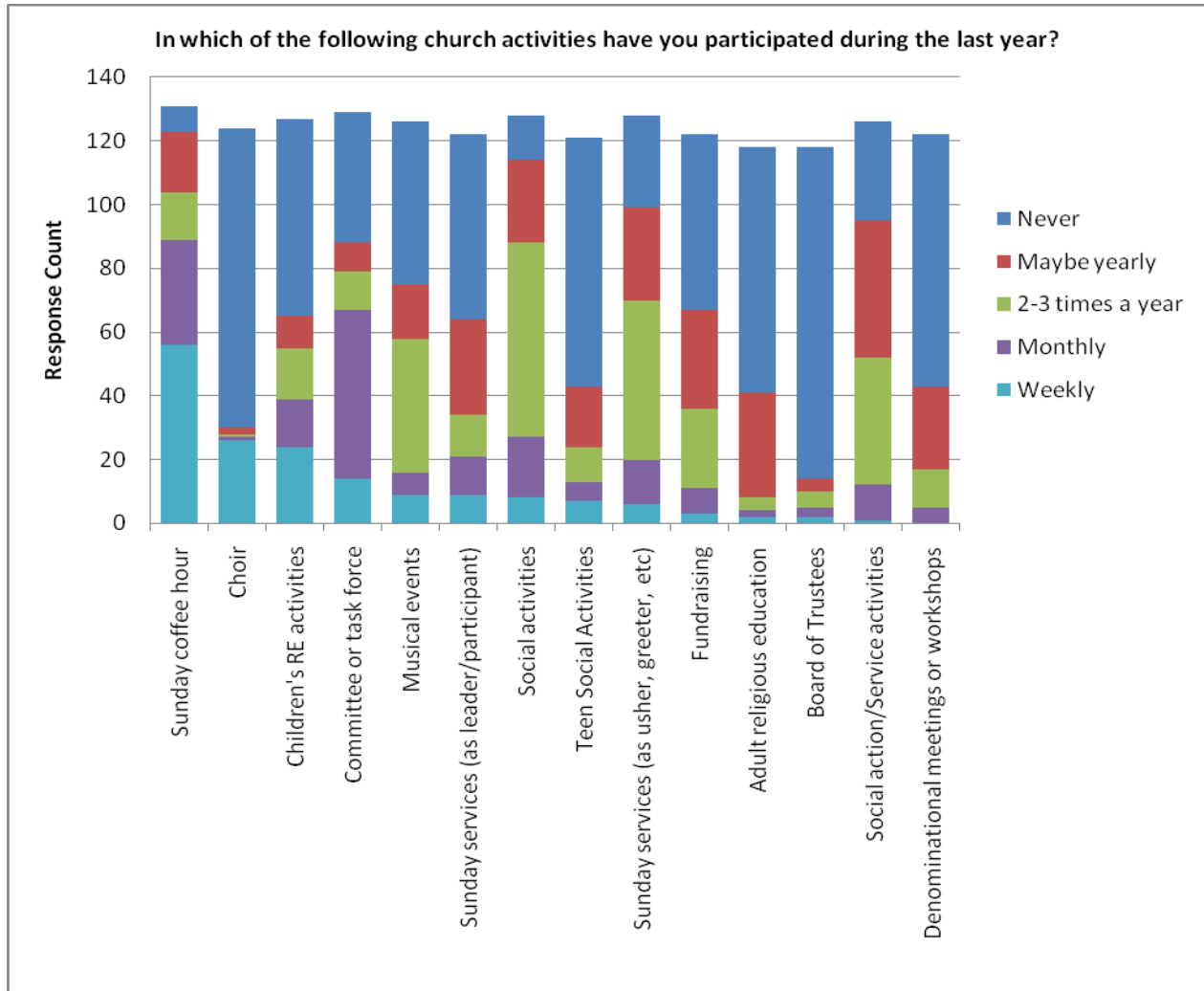
answered question 141

skipped question 5

Other (please specify)

- 1 I would be more drawn to the church if it did a "better" job of these--in a way that spoke to me or satisfied my interests more
- 2 tradition
- 3 I do not have children so these questions are N/A for me though believe these activities to be very important. Some items such as small group ministries are also important but may not have participated in same specifically at Milton UU
- 4 CUUPS
- 5 Great Blue Hill CUUPS
- 6 Located in Milton, where I live
- 7 When our children were young RE/youth group were very important
- 8 CUUPS
- 9 Because I have the opportunity to lead, as I am growing and learning.

Question 19 – Church Participation by Respondents



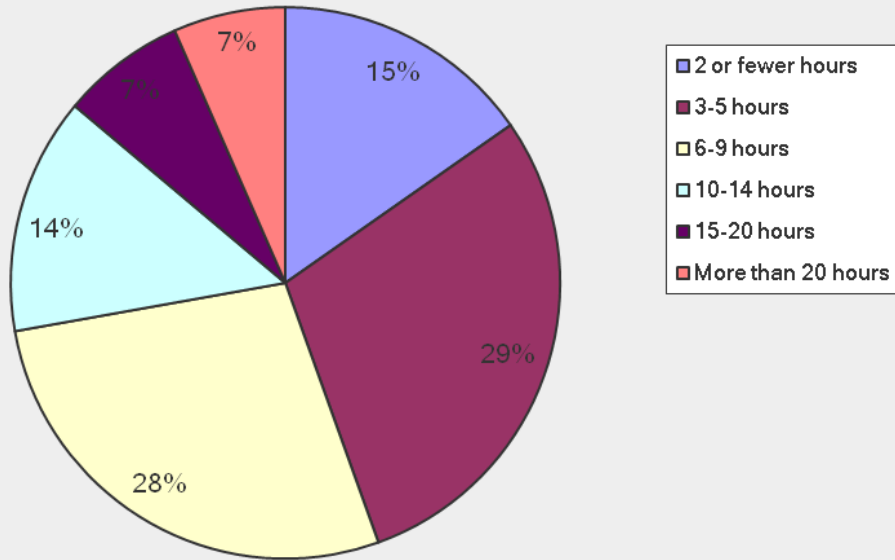
answered question 138
skipped question 8

Other (please specify)

- 1 teach RE
- 2 Adult RE is Yoga
- 3 Have no children so these do not apply
- 4 Choir
- 5 Great Blue Hill CUUPS
- 6 I took last year off.....
- 7 Earth Centered
- 8 New to the church
- 9 Out of state 4 months per year

Question 20 – Hours of Church-Related Participation Reported by Respondents

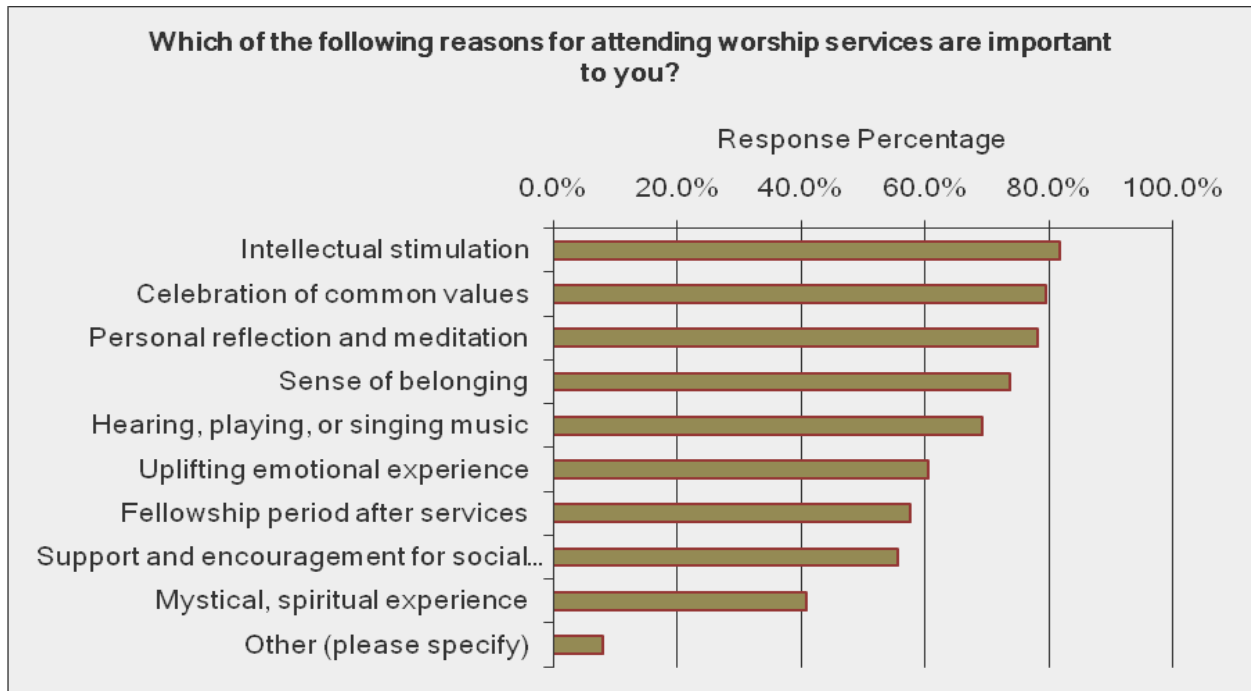
For how many hours a month, on average, did you participate in church activities (including Sunday services, coffee hours, Religious Education, committee work, etc.) during the most recent church year?



answered question
skipped question

137
9

Question 21 – Reasons for Attending Services Reported by Respondents

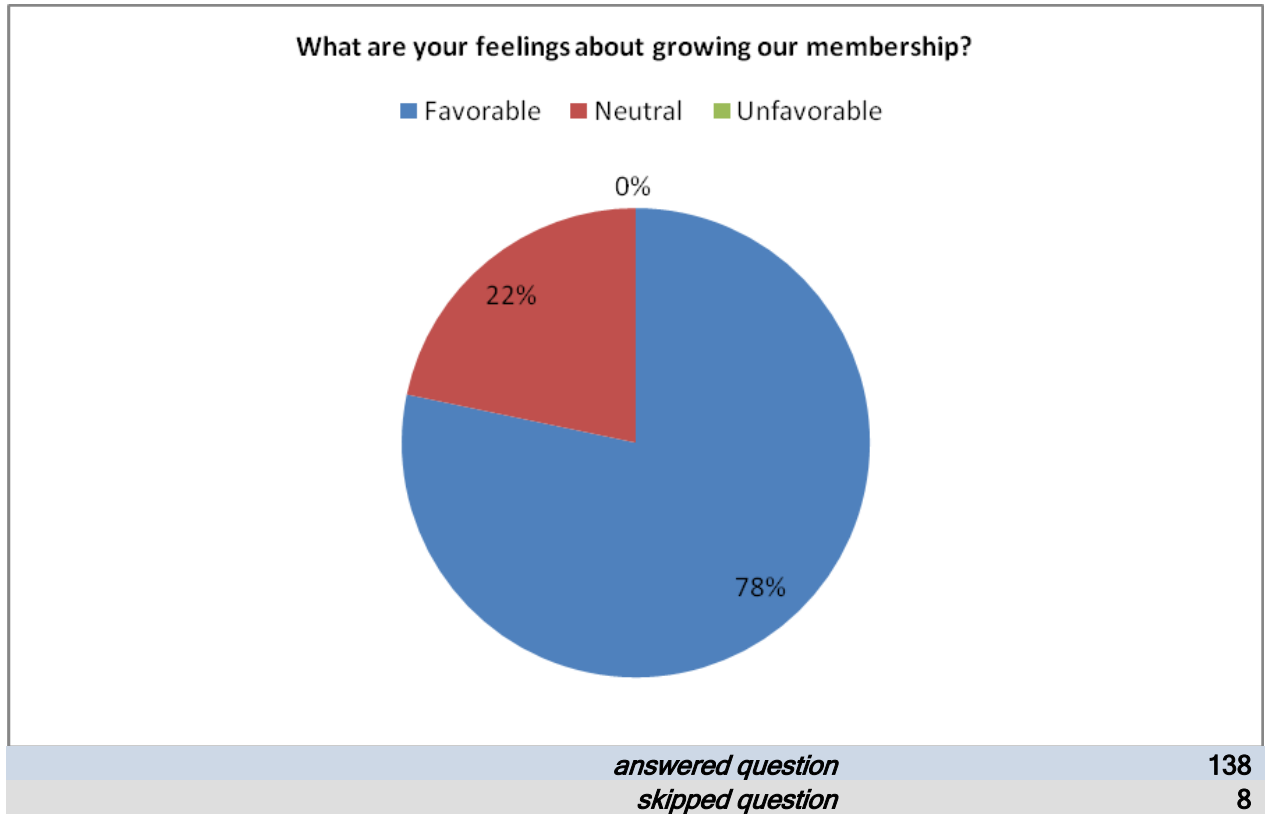


answered question **137**
skipped question **9**

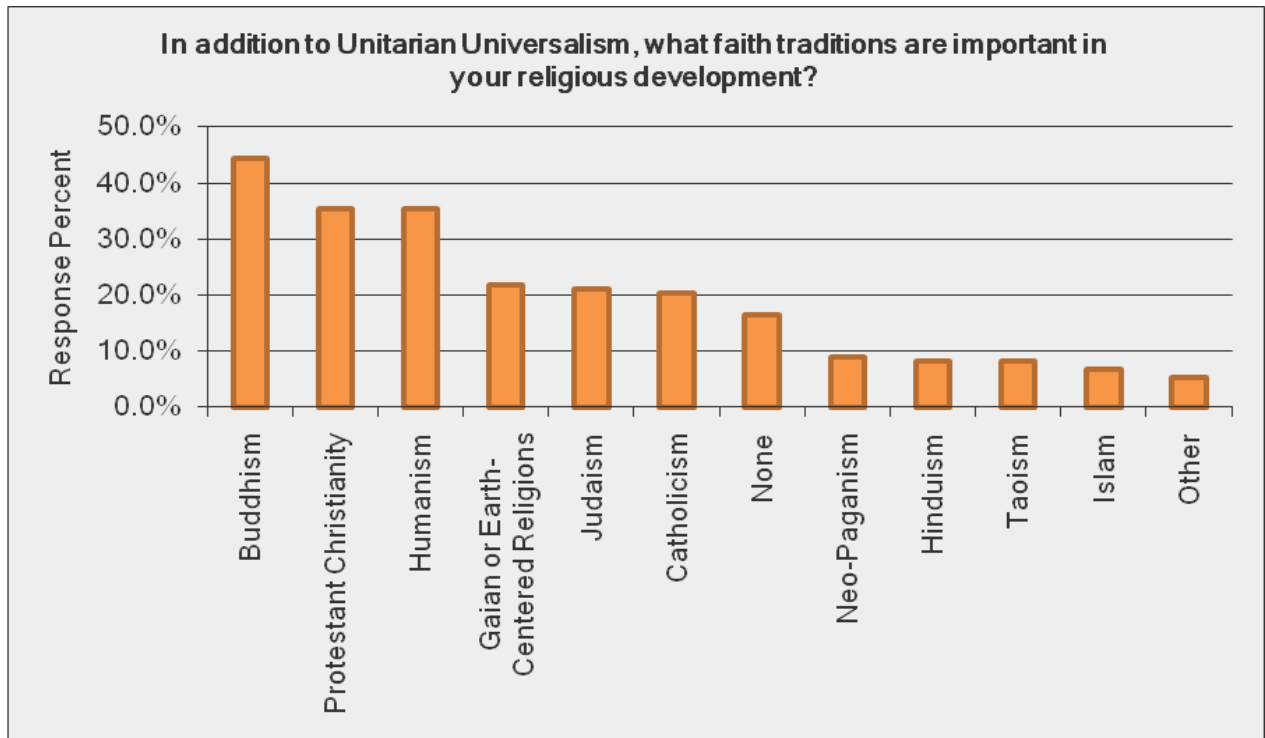
Other (please specify)

- 1 motivational leadership
- 2 But I don't feel the church has met all of these for me
- 3 exploring diversity (promoting understanding between diverse worldviews); probing our own "situatedness;" public discourse; democratic principles;
- 4 Sermons (and how I can relate them to my life as a spiritual/political person, are far and away the biggest factor.
- 5 Personal reflection but not meditation
- 6 Humor, I like to laugh in church...at ourselves, at life...
- 7 Connection to larger religious heritage/history
- 8 Children's R.E.
- 9 Connections to others that support personal efforts toward a better self
- 10 I miss Joel Hiller. I feel the current music it outdated
- 11 Intellectual is good but other factors more important. Other avenues for intellectual discourse.

Question 22 – Respondent’s View on Growth of Membership



Question 23 – Other Faith Traditions Valued by Respondents



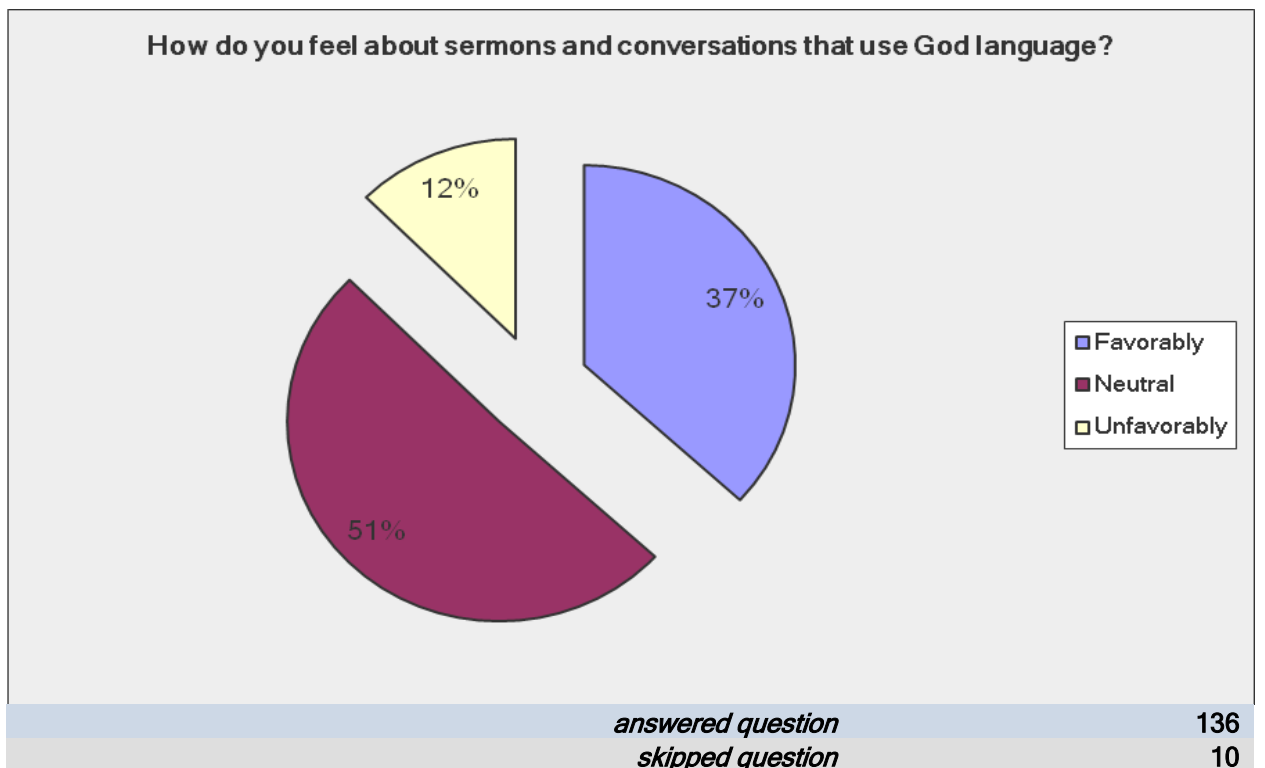
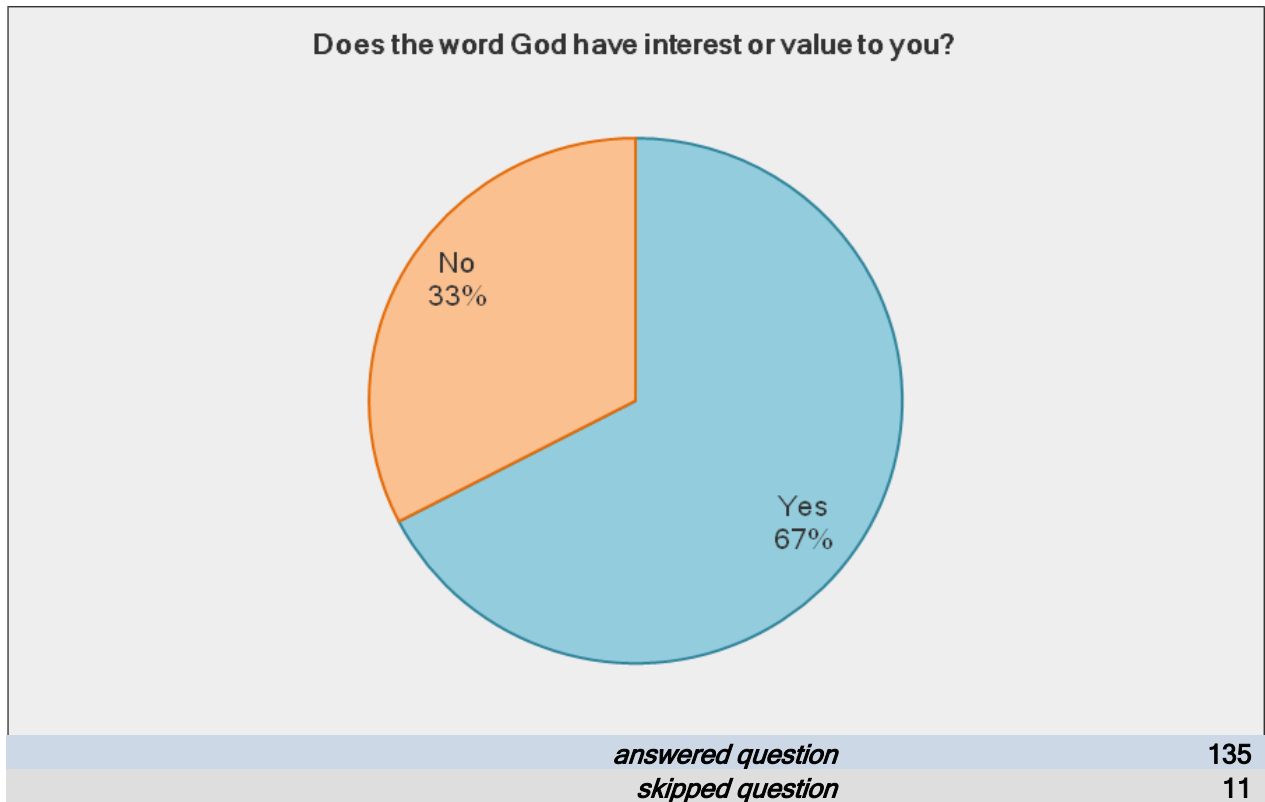
answered question
skipped question

133
13

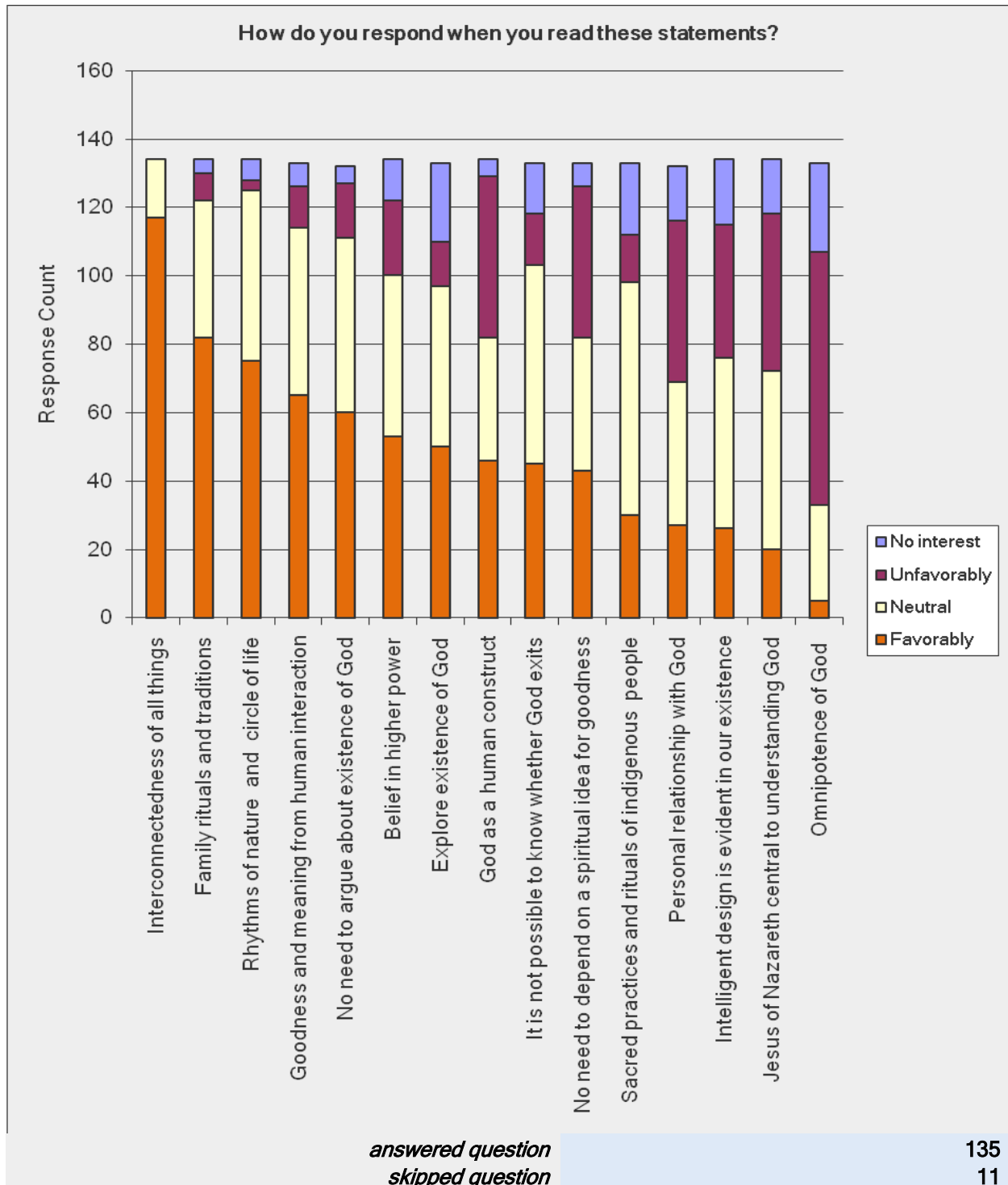
Other (please specify)

- 1 A broad understanding of traditions and their influence.
- 2 all to some extent
- 3 All faith traditions are of interest to me from a cultural studies perspective rather than a devotional perspective. While some may contribute to my own personal journey more than others for me the most critical journey as a community is to foster mutual understanding and community between diverse worldviews to promote peaceful co-existence
- 4 Quakerism
- 5 Great Blue Hill CUUPS
- 6 EVERYTHING! I chose a UU church because we don't limit ourselves to a single religious tradition.
- 7 12 step
- 8 An education on all of these
- 9 Nature

Questions 24 and 25 – Value of word “God” for Respondents



Question 26 – Beliefs Identified by Respondents



Question 26 – Beliefs identified by Respondents (Continued)

Answer Options (summarized in graph above)

1. The interconnectedness of all things grounds me in my spiritual life
2. Family rituals and traditions are key for my religious and spiritual life
3. The rhythms of nature and the sacred circle of life guide my life
4. Humans created "goodness" and "meaning" as a response to human interaction
5. God may exist but arguing over God's existence or message is a wasteful use of our time and resources
6. There is a higher power that gives me comfort
7. God may, or may not, exist. I want to explore the possibility
8. "God" is a human construct that has been used to rule or control people and has been used to justify great suffering
9. It is not possible to know whether God exists
10. We can better ourselves through willpower, to be good people. There is no need to depend on a spiritual idea to attend goodness
11. I find spiritual inspiration in the sacred practices and rituals of indigenous people.
12. A personal relationship with God is a vital part of my spiritual life and a necessary part of my worship experience
13. Intelligent design is evident in our existence
14. The life, teachings and death of Jesus of Nazareth are central to my understanding of God
15. The omnipotence of God is the focus of my respect and devotion.

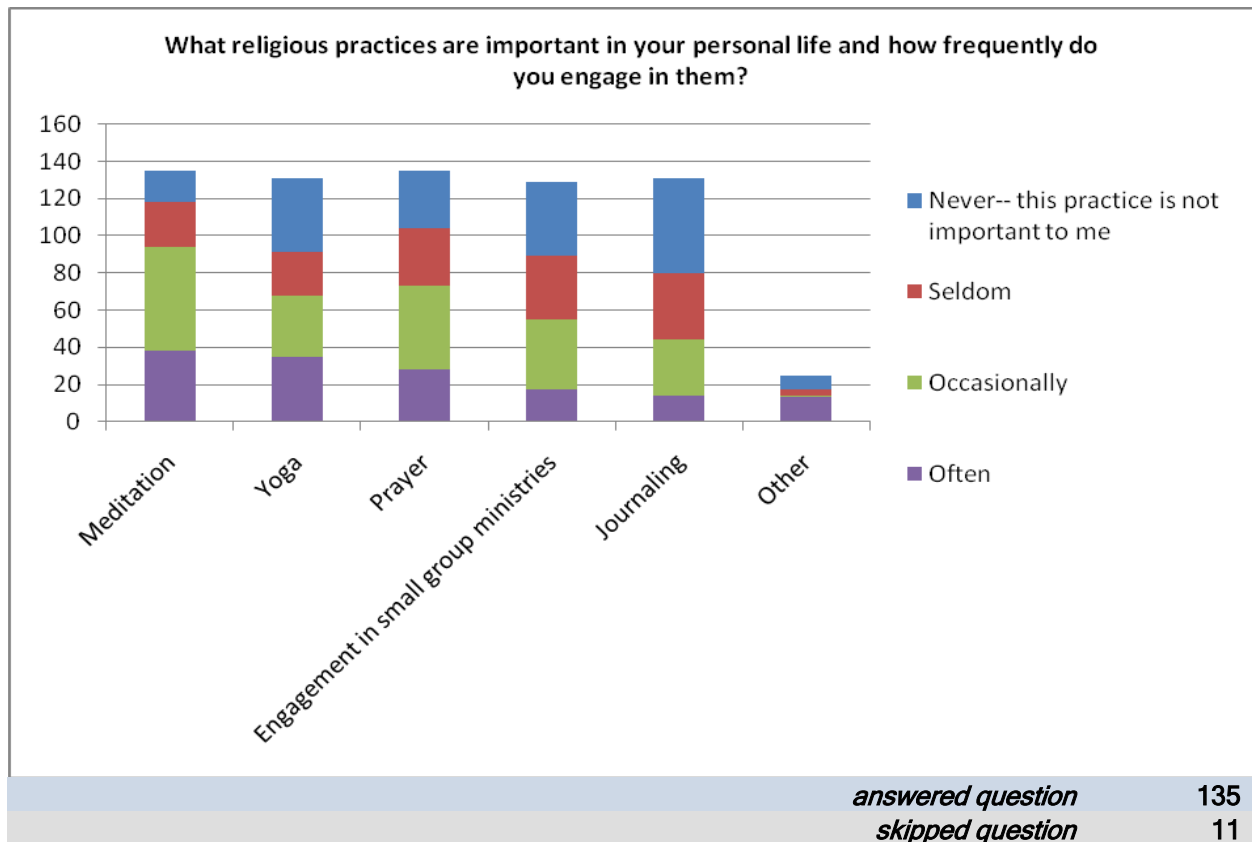
Other (please specify)

- 1 I believe there is some divine energy or spirit in the universe, and prefer to use one vehicle as a launching point for understanding it rather than what often feels like the helter skelter approach of modern UU
- 2 The greatest spiritual truths are apprehended across many cultures and traditions.
- 3 Tough to respond to these with the options given. I do not necessarily associate "spiritual" with devotional. I am not inclined to devotional practices but very drawn to investigating many worldviews from a cultural studies approach and to further mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence
- 4 I like discussing "God" as long as it's with an understanding that we don't know exactly what God means or is, but something we are trying to discover or choose to have faith in without knowing for sure. And as long as agnostic/atheistic viewpoints and counterarguments are never discredited and are valued to be just as likely to be true since there is no hard evidence in a greater power's existence; for example, "'God' is a human construct that has been used to rule or control people and has been used to justify great suffering" is one undeniable truth about "God" as a concept, but that doesn't mean that there isn't a true higher power or that "God" hasn't also been used by people for incredible good. I also believe faith/religion is only as useful to a person's life as the morality it supports; my respect for "God" has nothing to do with how much power he has, but for whether his values/principles are positive for the world. As we see in countries/religions around the world, being powerful doesn't make you right. I think that goes for "God" as well.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 5 Earth-centered spirituality/paganism/shamanism
- 6 Presume by Whether God Exits, you mean Exists !
- 7 I am a recovering person. As part of my spiritual development I practice Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than myself can restore me to sanity. I love that the UU faith allows me to define and change that definition of a higher power and allows my fellow members to believe differently or not believe at all.
- 8 The choices favorable/neutral/unfavorable didn't seem a good way to capture my responses to these statements.
- 9 The scaling is too judgmental and not reflective of the way I think or can respond faithfully with. A scale of numbers using the language of strongly agree and Strongly disagree would be more in keeping with the values I think of when I think about first parish.
- 10 I am not a theist, but I do not object to discussions of deity and the devine. While I believe that the concept of God has been used for evil purposes, at least as much evil has been done by those who forcefully deny God.
- 11 I believe God IS a human "construct" but I also believe the God in each of us is more positive than negative

Question 27 – Importance of Different Religious Practices for Respondents

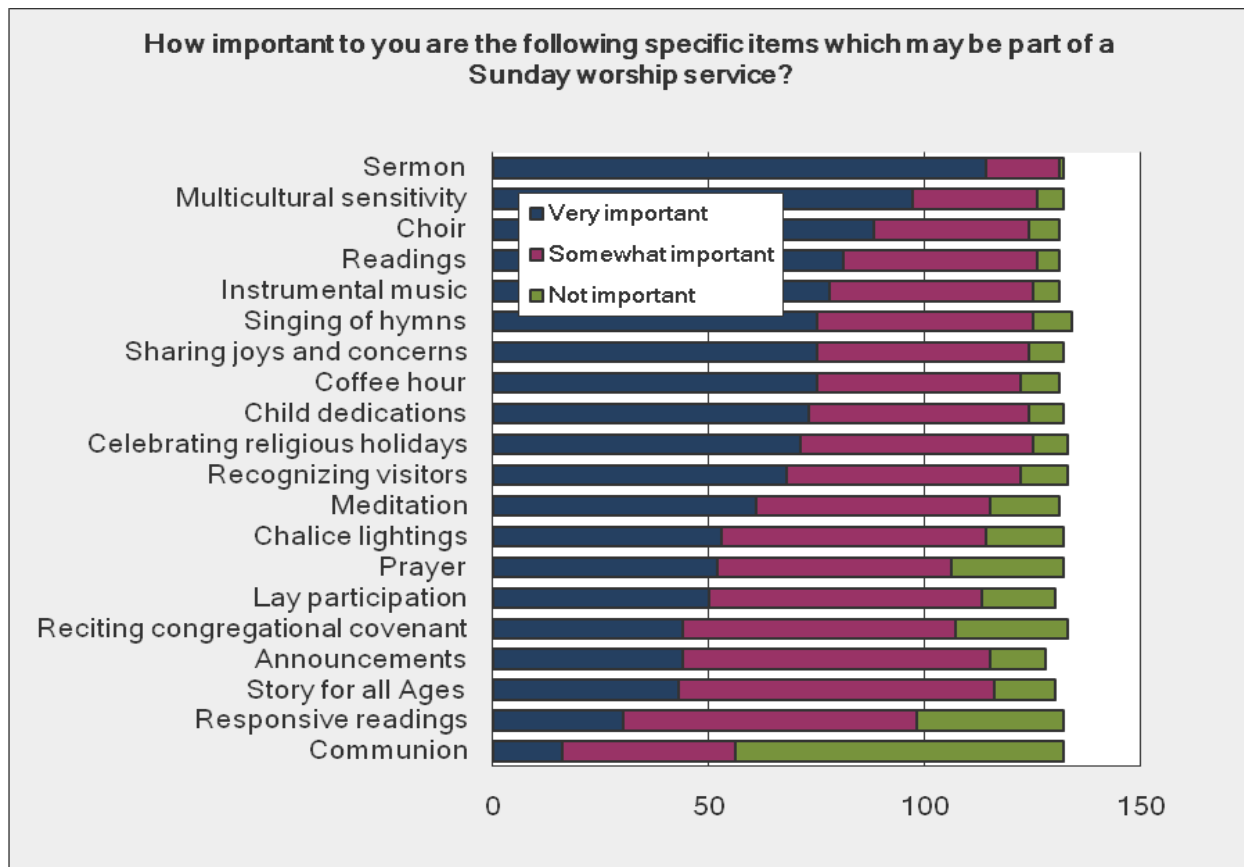


First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Other (please specify)

- 1 exercise, sports
- 2 I meditate while walking; not meditating like in popular culture but more like reflecting on things that make me who I am and what I want to be. On connections to other people that are important, on people who are close to me who have passed away, what I got from them and what was lost
- 3 UU sermons
- 4 Music, Poetry
- 5 Choir is my FP "small group"
- 6 Politics, social justice, economic justice, holding empathy as my most important trait (next to love), trying to be the best person I can be and pour as much love out into the world as I can.
- 7 not sure how to answer -- they are important but i don't practice enough!
- 8 Teaching others / exercise
- 9 Breat Blue Hill CUUPS
- 10 singing and dancing (often)
- 11 Going to service weekly; doing good deeds daily
- 12 would like more small groups
- 13 Reading philosophy, religions, and spiritual books
- 14 Earth Centered Spirituality services
- 15 Would like to try meditation and yoga.
- 16 I indicated Never for small group ministries, but that doesn't mean it isn't important to me. It's just I've not been involved yet.
- 17 Gardening -- used to do ALL THE TIME, never get to anymore. It hurts to not be able to get my hands into the dirt.
- 18 creating
- 19 Song
- 20 mindfulness practice
- 21 We don't have small groups. My answer reflects my desire, rather than reality.
- 22 *I wish there were more opportunity for small group ministry
- 23 connecting with the natural world, volunteerism
- 24 Sailing alone
- 25 time spent in nature

Question 28 – Importance of Worship Themes for Respondents



answered question 134

skipped question 12

Other (please specify)

- 1 strong, charismatic, spiritual leader
- 2 I like the organ but otherwise instrumental music is not important to me. I don't think we should be insensitive to "multi cultural" but again I feel we are lacking a core.
- 3 Helping make sense of the world
- 4 I indicated "sermon" as very important though the term itself is problematic for me since this presentation need not be faith based. Indeed, I feel respond more profoundly to thoughtful presentations that do not presume a faith orientation among the congregation.
- 5 Esbats and sabbats
- 6 Liturgical Dance
- 7 I like when we do participatory activities sometimes and when children perform or help organize the service.
- 8 I celebrate secularized Christian holidays and standard American holidays (Thanksgiving), but I love holidays in general, including seasonal rituals. Completely open to a church that celebrates holidays and rituals from diverse traditions.
- 9 All ages worship doesn't work- by trying to appeal to everyone we end up w a watered down story that resonates with only a few.
- 10 I should clarify the hymns singing. Some of the hymns in the gray book I like, others not so much. But I love, love, love the teal hymnal.
- 11 Diversity in music
- 12 More diverse music
- 13 This section seems to ask what features of the liturgy are important to us? It's not clear what

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

you are referring to by recognizing visitors. I think you mean the welcome before announcements.

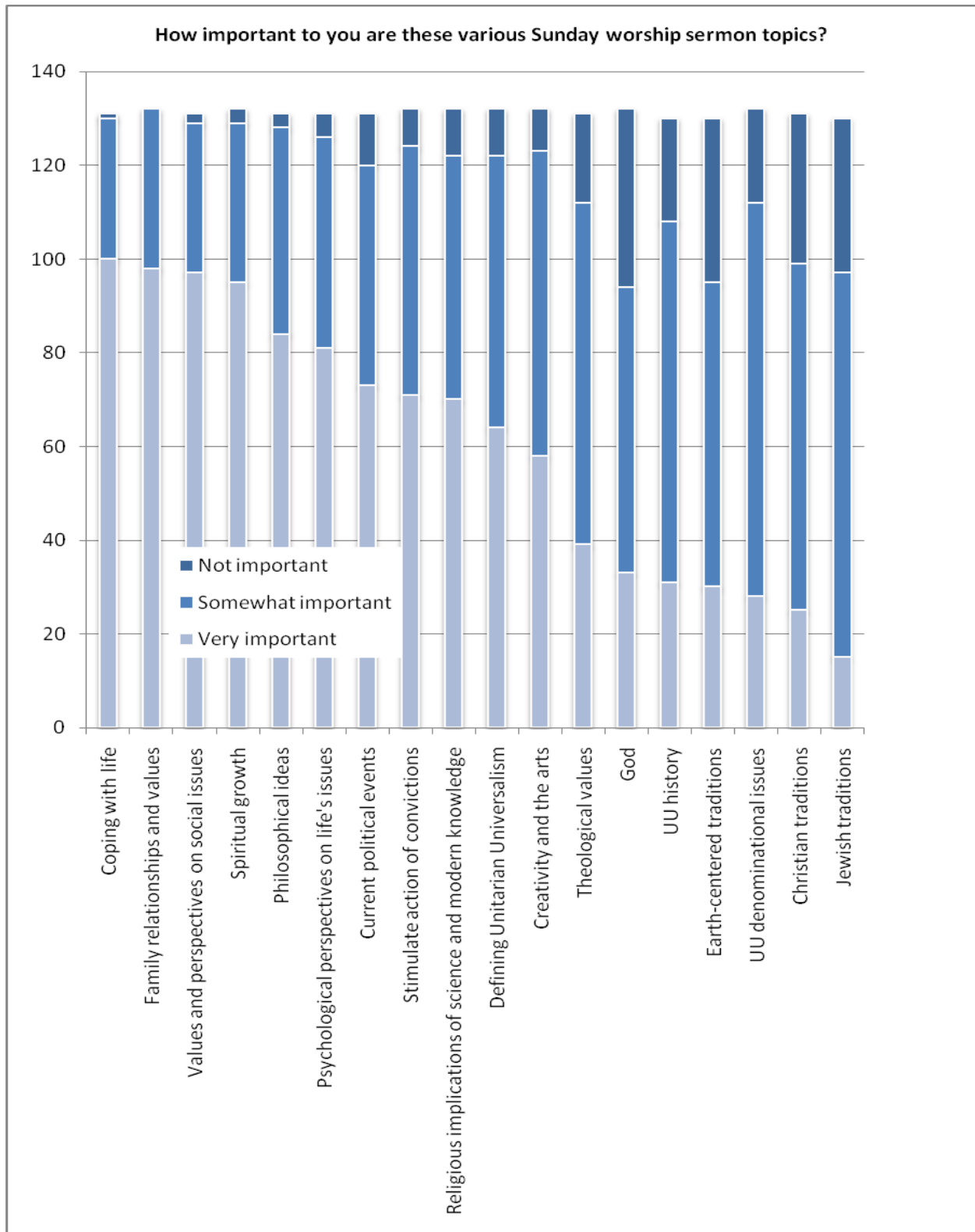
14 I have a strong dislike of communion.

15 Being warmly greeted by fellow members of the congregation.

16 I do not limit the sermon to a talk - the sermon can be delivered in a variety of formats and I am open to experimentation. The "sermon" is just the central point of the service. Variety in its delivery is delightful.

17 greeting each other is very important

Question 29 – Importance of Worship Sermon Topics for Respondents



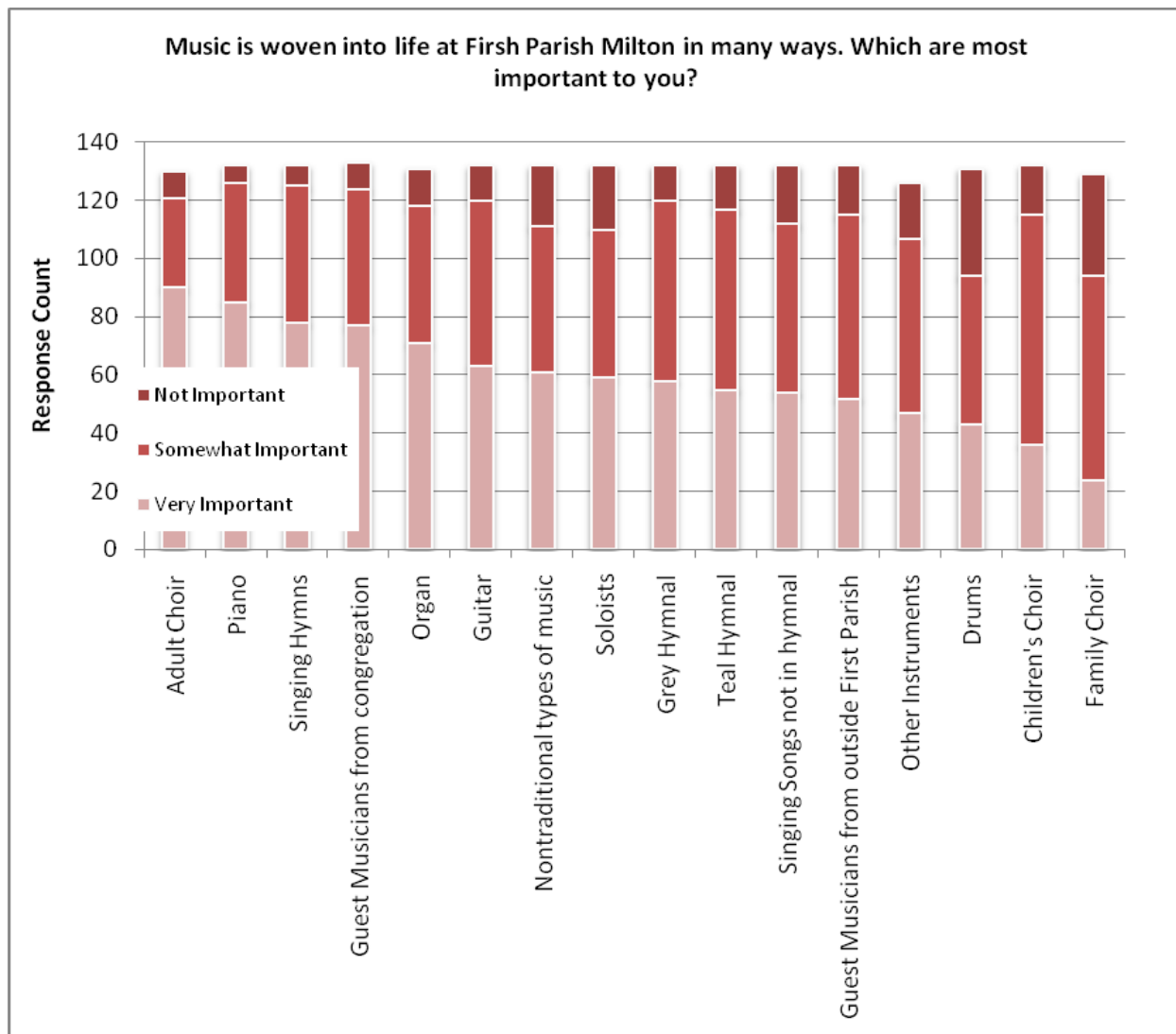
answered question 132
skipped question 14

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

Other (please specify)

- 1 constant seeking truth, emphasis people believe what you want.
- 2 Christian tradition hold no higher attraction for me than do other traditions. I am not interested in devotional approaches. Deeply interested in a cultural studies approach to diverse worldview
- 3 Great Blue Hill CUUPS
- 4 Engaging public speaking abilities
- 5 Traditions of other world religious traditions, large and small, humanist philosophy and teaching
- 6 What I like is a well thought out sermon that doesn't seem to drag on with a series of unrelated items.
- 7 in addition to Christian and Jewish traditions, other major faiths, such as Muslim, Buddhist, etc.
- 8 This is a good list. All of these are important, but I think the value of these changes over time and therefore, I can't answer this question on the scale given.
- 9 I like of mix of topics. No single one or group of these topics needs to dominate.

Question 30 – Importance of the Different Music Types for Respondents



answered question 133

skipped question 13

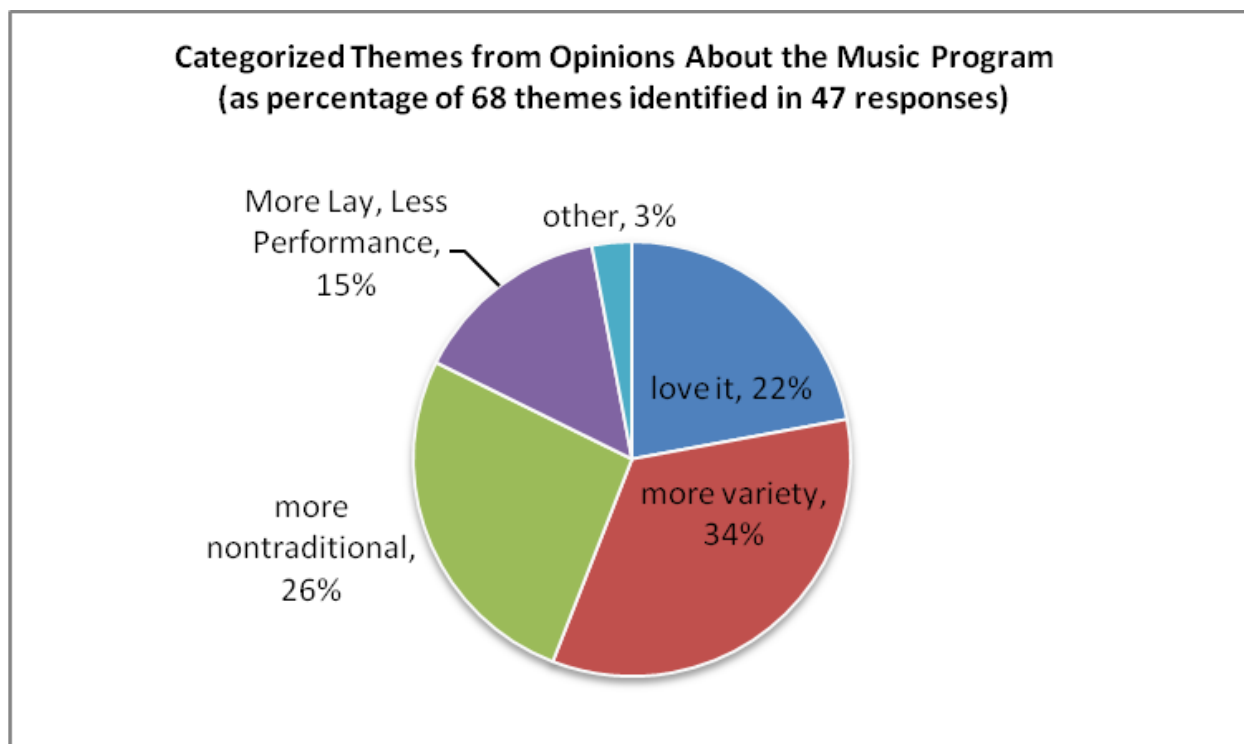
Other (please specify)

- 1 Music is important, keep it strong!
- 2 I do not believe that choir or the music should be a performance but rather should be an integral part of the religious service and be in the background and in the choir loft not on a stage in front of us--having them in front us distracts my mind from meditation and concentration.
- 3 Red Hymnal
- 4 I do not participate in any form of choir but support it for those who do derive enjoyment. I am more interested in diversity in music presentations
- 5 The hymns are painful unless we are using the teal book.
- 6 Time to take the red hymnal out of the pews?
- 7 I love that music is incorporated into the Sunday service and also that the opportunity to sing or play draws talented people to First Parish.
- 8 I appreciate the work of the special soloists but feel they only resonate w a few members.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 9 Is there a family choir and children's choir?
- 10 I think it is important to have diversity in the music at FP, both in terms of who does it (various choirs, individuals, etc) and the types of music, traditional hymns and church music, folk music, rock music, music from other cultures). We have taken stabs at more musical diversity, but currently are heavily weighted towards very traditional music. While I think that christian choral music should be in the mix, there is too much of it right now. There is lots of musical talent in the church and we are not inviting that in. I do think there is a role for continuing of hymns and both hymnals, as the repetition of hymns is part of what I find grounding in the liturgy.
- 11 I like a wide variety of music, and I know that some members of the congregation like an even wider variety. I'd like to see as much variation in music style, instrumental combinations, and such as we have time and talent available.

Question 31 – Respondents’ Opinions about Music



Other Opinions about the music program at First Parish Milton (please describe)

- 1 music is important to me but I appreciate a variety of music
- 2 Make sure Tim Steele is adequately compensated and respected so he feels appreciated and wants to stay.
- 3 more modern music and music that everyone knows that is fun to sing to
- 4 excellent program
- 5 love it. So grateful. Would love a little more mixture of genres. But in general, so thankful for Tim's leadership and the dedication of the musicians.
- 6 brings joy and can compliment ideas of service
- 7 Positioning the choir at the front of the meetinghouse severely impairs the worship experience.
- 8 Music is a critical portion of creating a spiritual setting.
- 9 Very positive.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 10 it is great
- 11 I love the choir and the soloists and all the musicians. I miss songs from my old days that made impacts on me, like Be Not Afraid, Eagles Wings, Whatsoever You Do, All I Ask of You is Forever to Remember Me as Loving You
- 12 Music is essential in Church.
- 13 Community Concerts - excellent outreach
- 14 The more variety the better. I can live without many (but not all) of the traditional hymns sung from the hymnals
- 15 Music has always been a big part of the joy of Milton UU
- 16 I would like to see and hear more gospel and nontraditional music in church, music we can all take part in, and more solo and small groups from our congregation performing music. Do we have to have paid soloists? Can we have children sing in the main church?
- 17 We could really use a little jazzing up on the music!!
- 18 It was what originally drew us in. Because of it we were able to discover more about the church.
- 19 Tends to be very conservative and too much emphasis on choir . Would like more current music and instrumentals . and
- 20 more individual music and small groups. The children would also like to bring music into their weekly RE sessions and want to perform / share with larger congregation.
- 21 I would like to see more folk music with guitar
- 22 I like a variety of music. I would also like to see us better tap the musical talent among the members.
- 23 In my view it is too "church traditional".
- 24 I would like to see our Choir grow into a more developed entity in Milton.
- 25 I think it is essential and adds a lot to the vitality of First Parish
- 26 I miss Joel. I like non traditional music in church
- 27 FP has a vibrant music program and I look forward to selections made each Sunday.
- 28 I like having lots of different types of music in the service.
- 29 I would love for us to do more nontraditional/nonchurch type music. I'd love for us to do more folk music and popular-style pieces that have a spiritual element to them.
- 30 There is an abundance of musical talent at FP. I think bring in so many other talents perpetuates a model of professionalism that has little to do with cultivating the sacred through music. One orientation is performance oriented, the other participation oriented. In church of all places, music needs to be sung from the soul.
- 31 We have SO MUCH TALENT within the congregation. We need to hear MORE of them during services! Let's get more small groups performing, too.
- 32 I love the choir, soloists and Tim. Unfortunately, we've lost the diversity in music and seem to be more conservative and high church like. Need mechanism to invite, support and grow the musical ministry within the congregation. Sharing music and a song in a service is a way of prayer. Need democratic process in place to promote all voices, styles being heard. Different music touches different people in different ways. Right now, we seem to hear one style (and it is wonderful quality) but it reflects only one strata of our community.
- 33 Display the POWER of the organ
- 34 Def more variety and more offering to younger generations
- 35 wonderful!
- 36 Engage the congregation...don't attempt to entertain.
- 37 Enjoy a mix of music and instruments so that it is not just traditional or classical church music; enjoy having the music be integrated with the themes of worship; music that is inspirational, playful, varied, and draws on various traditions.
- 38 I would like to see more variety and less organ (not my favorite instrument)
- 39 It's a wonderful program but it seems like the music is very traditional, very old white protestant. I like the old hymns but I think we need more variety.
- 40 I would love to have instrumental music once/month.
- 41 Diversity of music is critical - it signals our opening to multiple cultural backgrounds,

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

challenges us to get outside our comfort zones, and makes worship less predictable and more exciting.

42 There should be more music.

43 I have greatly enjoyed when modern music is incorporated into services. I also love when we have musicians playing guitar or piano (especially Joel Hiller!). I feel much more drawn to this music than to the traditional music often chosen by the choir. I also am not a fan of the operatic style that is predominant among the soloists.

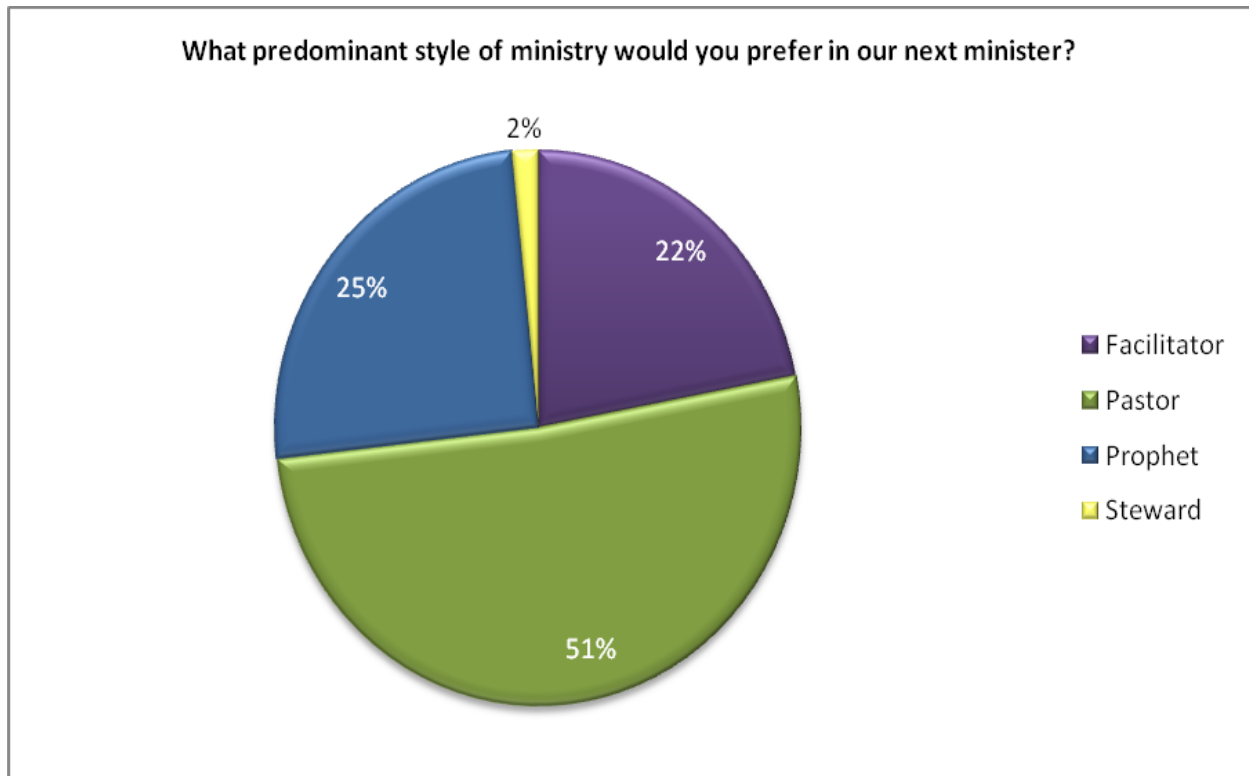
44 I have always found the music program at First Parish to be superior to most places of worship. It is a major factor in my continued attendance.

45 The history of our music program at First Parish is filled with richness and a great level of commitment by music director, choir, and soloists. I look forward every Sunday to the musical offerings and particularly enjoy hearing groups of congregation members perform new and interesting material.

46 Tim Steele is doing a fantastic job

47 I love having singable music, and am not a fan of plodding traditional hymns. Like music with meaningful lyrics that promote joy or thoughtfulness. Like music "outside the box."

Question 32 – Predominant Style of Minister Preferred



answered question 127
skipped question 19

Answer Options (summarized in graph above)

Facilitator: the minister as go-between; due to the connections forged among them by the minister, the congregation feels itself "spontaneously" under way

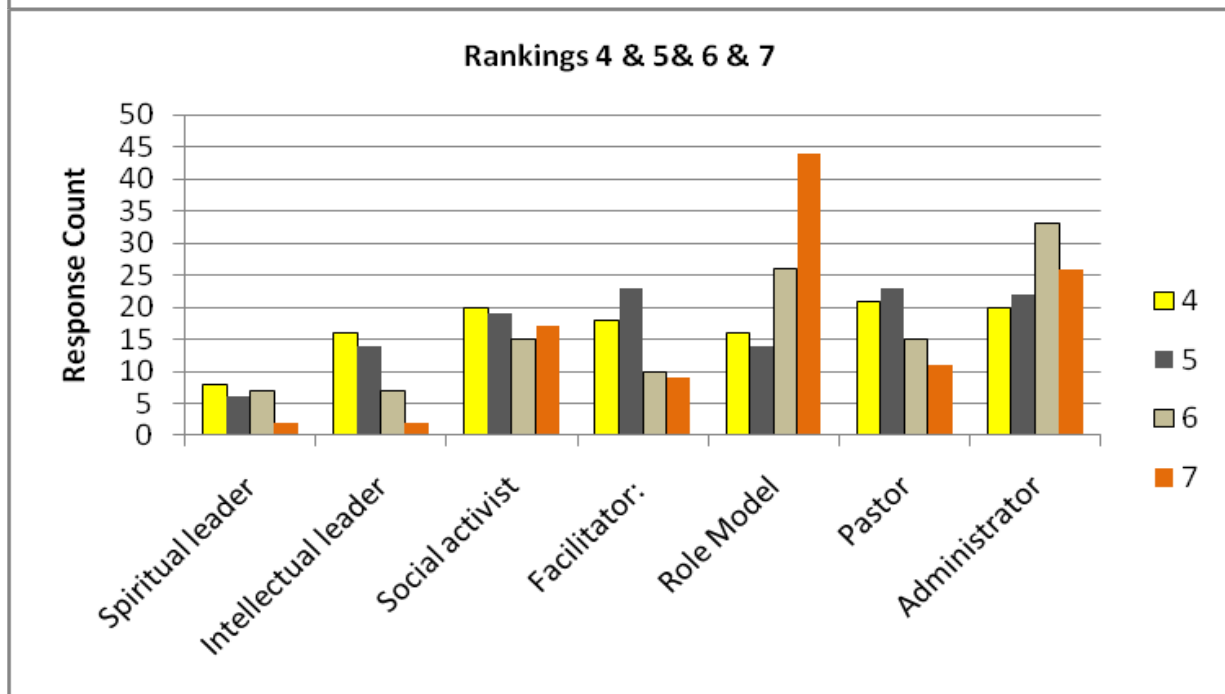
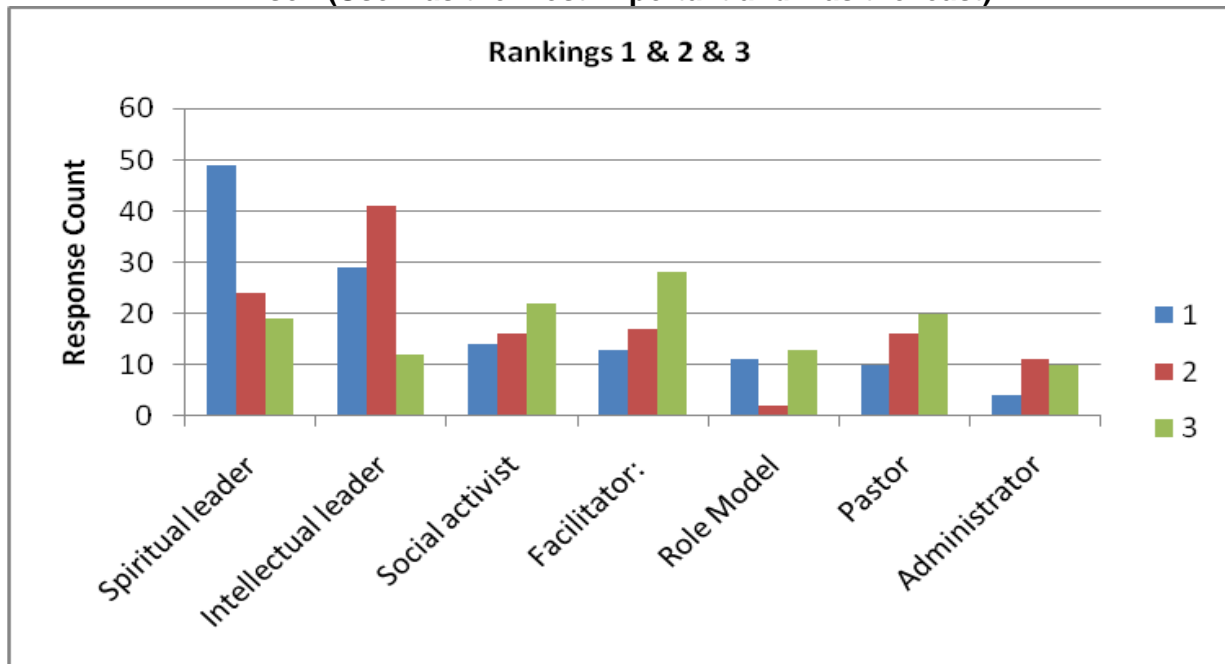
Pastor: the minister as chaplain; by virtue of their spiritual and moral gifts the minister becomes an influential counselor to individuals and to a strong lay leadership

Prophet: the minister as visionary; envisioning a future of promise, the minister inspires the congregation and the larger community to pursue it

Steward: the minister as city manager; with the minister dogging the details the congregation runs like a well-oiled machine

Question 33 – Prioritizing a Minister’s Function

A variety of functions comprise a minister's work. Each minister has to prioritize these functions, and thus their time. In what rank order would you like our next minister to do so? (Use 1 as the most important and 7 as the least)



answered question 131
skipped question 15

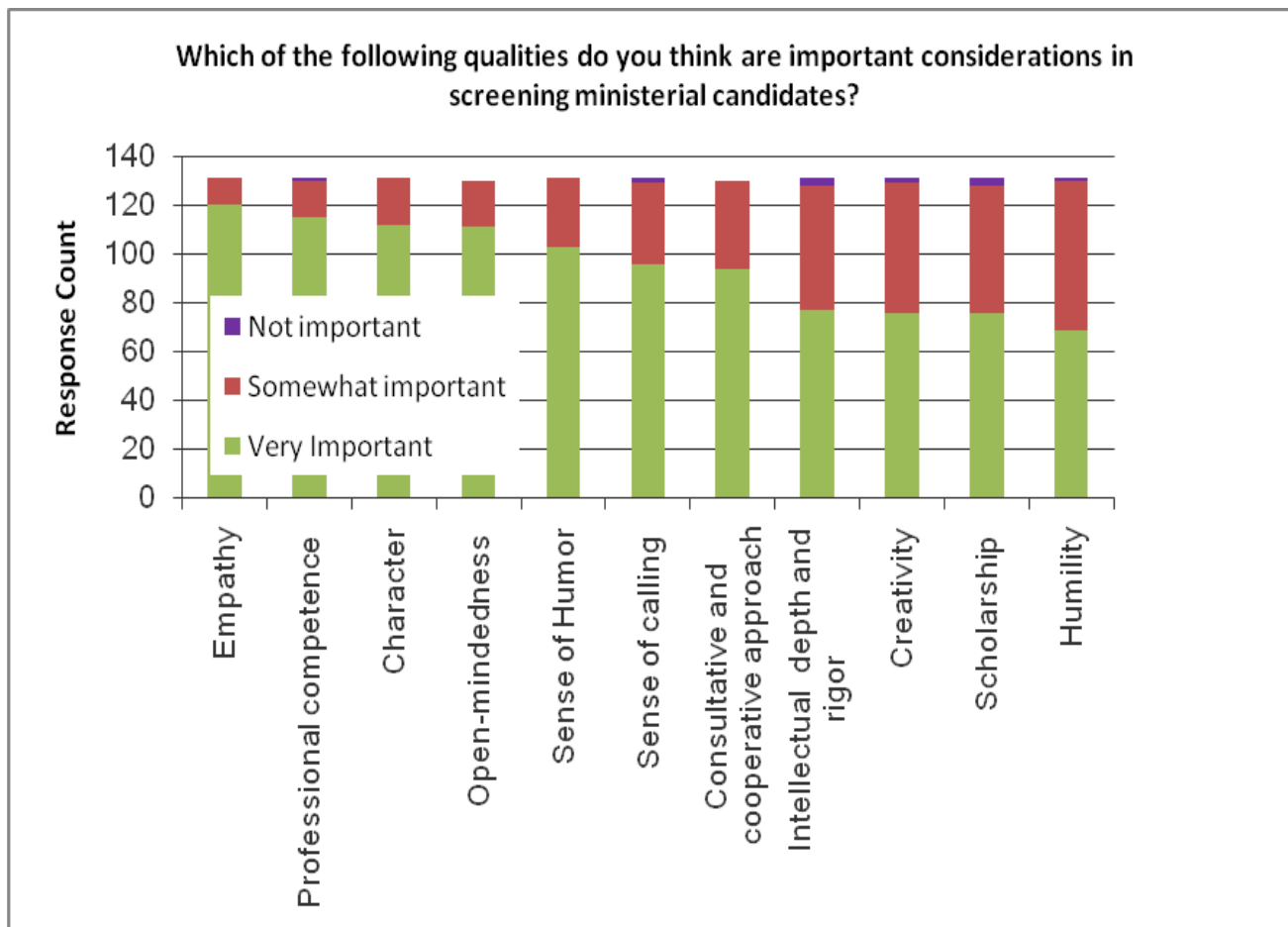
Other (please specify)

- 1 I did this section, rating all of them, got to "role model" , rated it and it cancelled out all of them except the one right above....not working right!

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 2 of course they all are important
- 3 I want a minister who is a strong leader and can bring the congregation together after what I feel were divisive and not well handled issues around the covenant and the temple. Growth in numbers of members is not important--retaining those we have, and making them feel welcome, is.
- 4 coordinate rather than order, lead but include
- 5 The term "Prophet" may be problematic for me. Perhaps a visionary - keen intellect, committed, compassionate, socially responsible - mixed with facilitator.
- 6 this section does not work...previous checks are erased as new ones entered...my choices should be:1,3,2,1,1,1,1
- 7 I think we must address the role of the minister in the fundraising efforts of the church. As someone that has been part of the finance committee and annual fund drive for three years, I have been disappointed with the involvement of the previous minister in the success of the annual drive. I hope the Search Committee includes in the interview process, a series of questions about how does the next minister see himself/herself as part of the fundraising process for the church.
- 8 resolve "what would you do" issues in sermons
- 9 able to engage all ages
- 10 This is a tough one!
- 11 These ranking represent what I think our congregation's actions and capacities has said it needs, rather than what I personally would like. I am committed to the community, and that's what my answer reflects. We had a visionary and a social activist and didn't go where that was pointing. It's time to admit who we are and grow those gifts we have and have the capacity to use.

Question 34 – Important Qualities for our Minister



answered question 131
skipped question 15

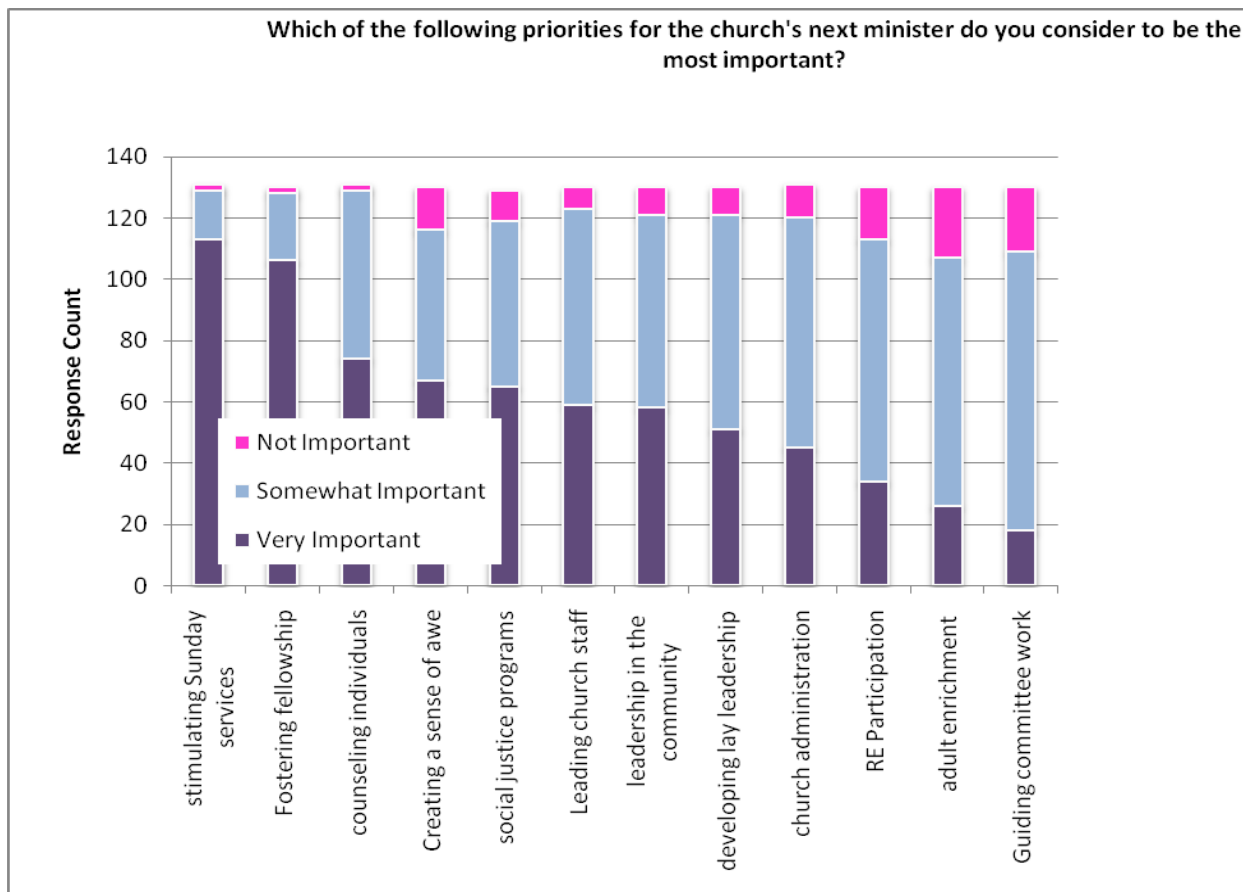
Answer Options (summarized in graph above)

1. Empathy (genuine interest in and concern about others)
2. Professional competence (ability to communicate, counsel, empower, etc.)
3. Character (strong moral consistency, stability, reliability)
4. Open-mindedness (receptive to other ideas)
5. Sense of Humor
6. Sense of calling (motivated, enthusiastic)
7. Consultative and cooperative approach
8. Intellectual depth and rigor
9. Creativity (ability to develop and present new ideas and methods)
10. Scholarship (educated, informed, interesting)
11. Humility (awareness of their limitations)

Other (please specify)

- 1 Rev. Hank Peirce is doing an outstanding job, Rev. Dana Greeley also a good example of what a good minister is in my mind. Rev. Michael Boardman also very good.
- 2 I would like a minister who is a strong leader . Creativity and open mindedness are valuable but not in the sense of our always "reinventing the wheel". Stability would be nice for a change.
- 3 spiritually inspiring

Question 35 – Ministerial Priorities as Reported by Respondents

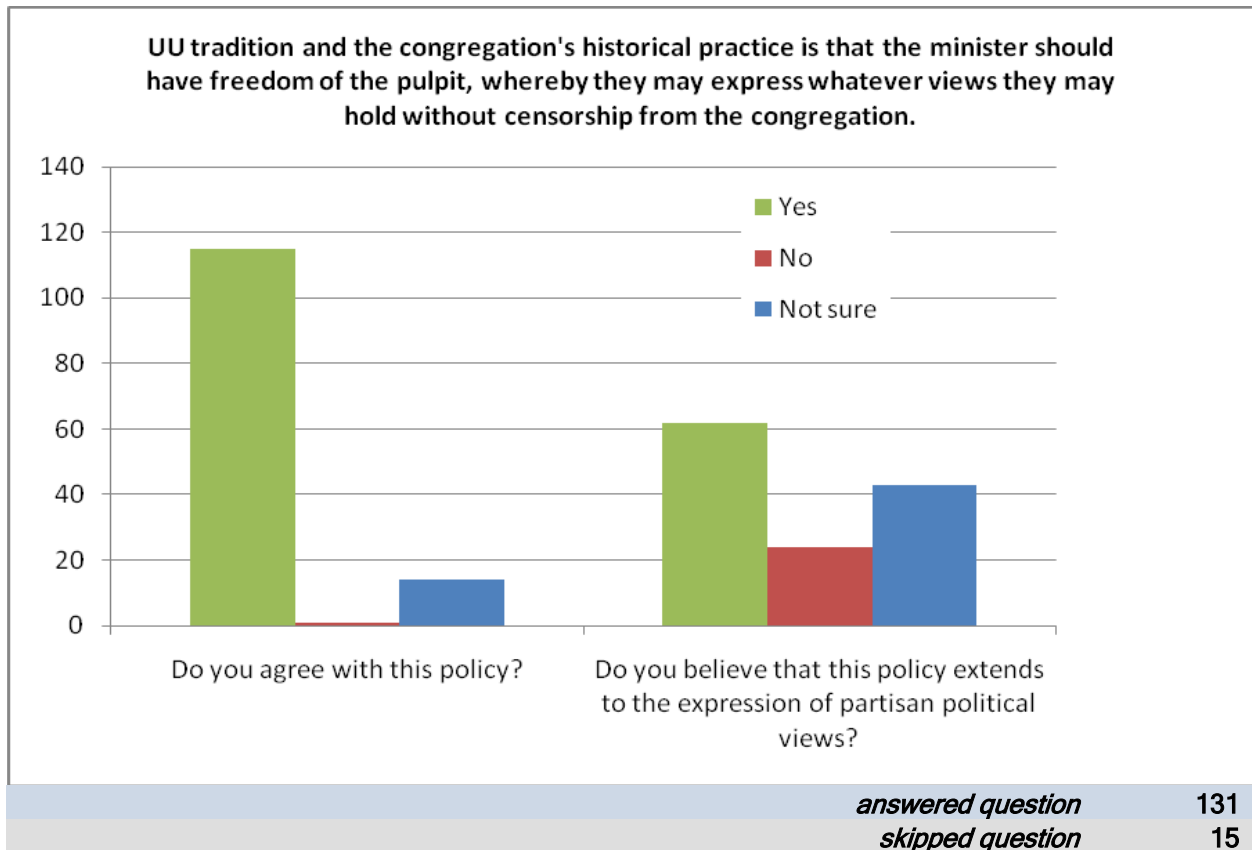


answered question **132**
skipped question **14**

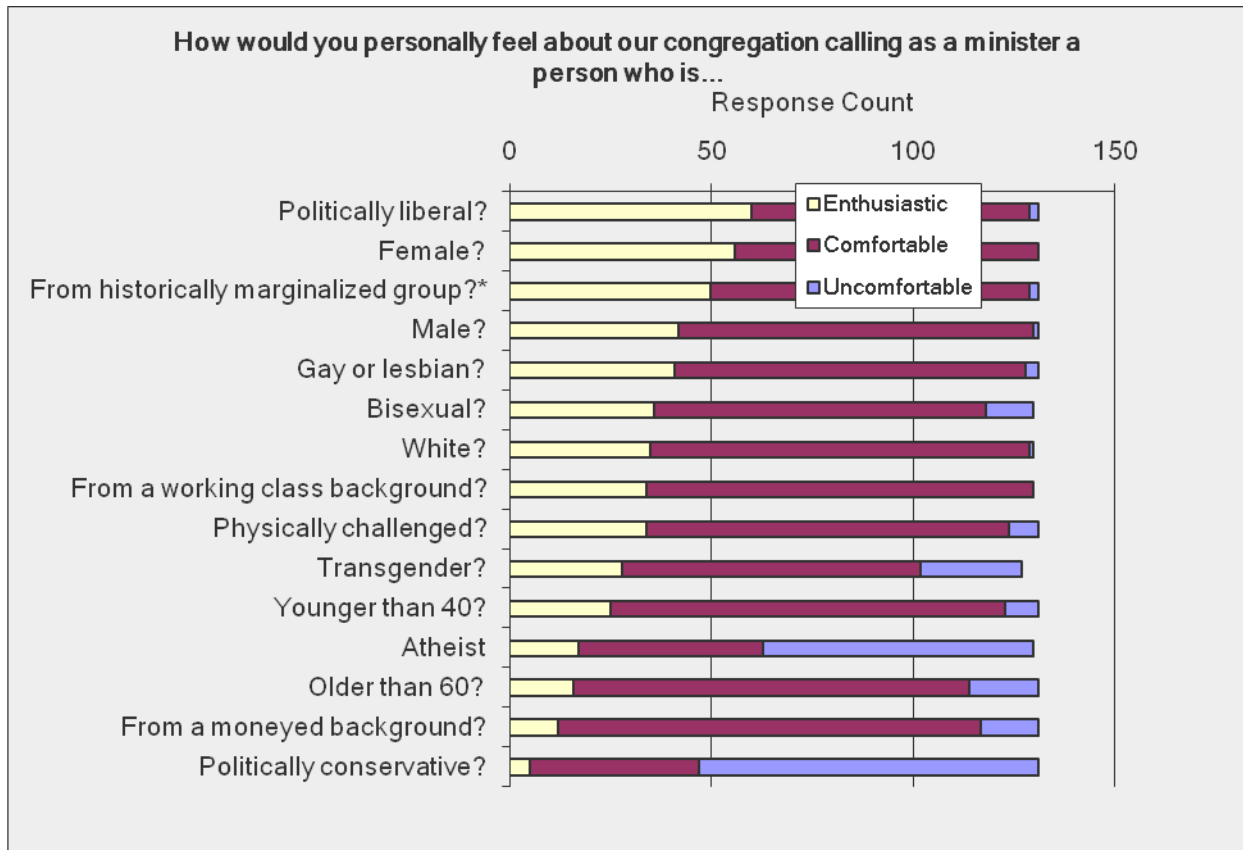
Answer Options (as numbered in graph above)

- 1 Presenting stimulating and challenging Sunday services
- 2 Fostering a sense of fellowship and community within the church
- 3 Caring for and counseling individuals
- 4 Creating a sense of awe and wonder in Sunday services
- 5 Encouraging congregational social justice programs
- 6 Leading and guiding the church staff
- 7 Providing visible leadership in the community beyond the church
- 8 Encouraging volunteers and developing lay leadership
- 9 Assuring efficient and effective church administration
- 10 Participating in religious education for children and youth
- 11 Offering stimulating adult enrichment programs
- 12 Guiding/facilitating committee work

Question 36 – Respondents’ View on Freedom of the Pulpit



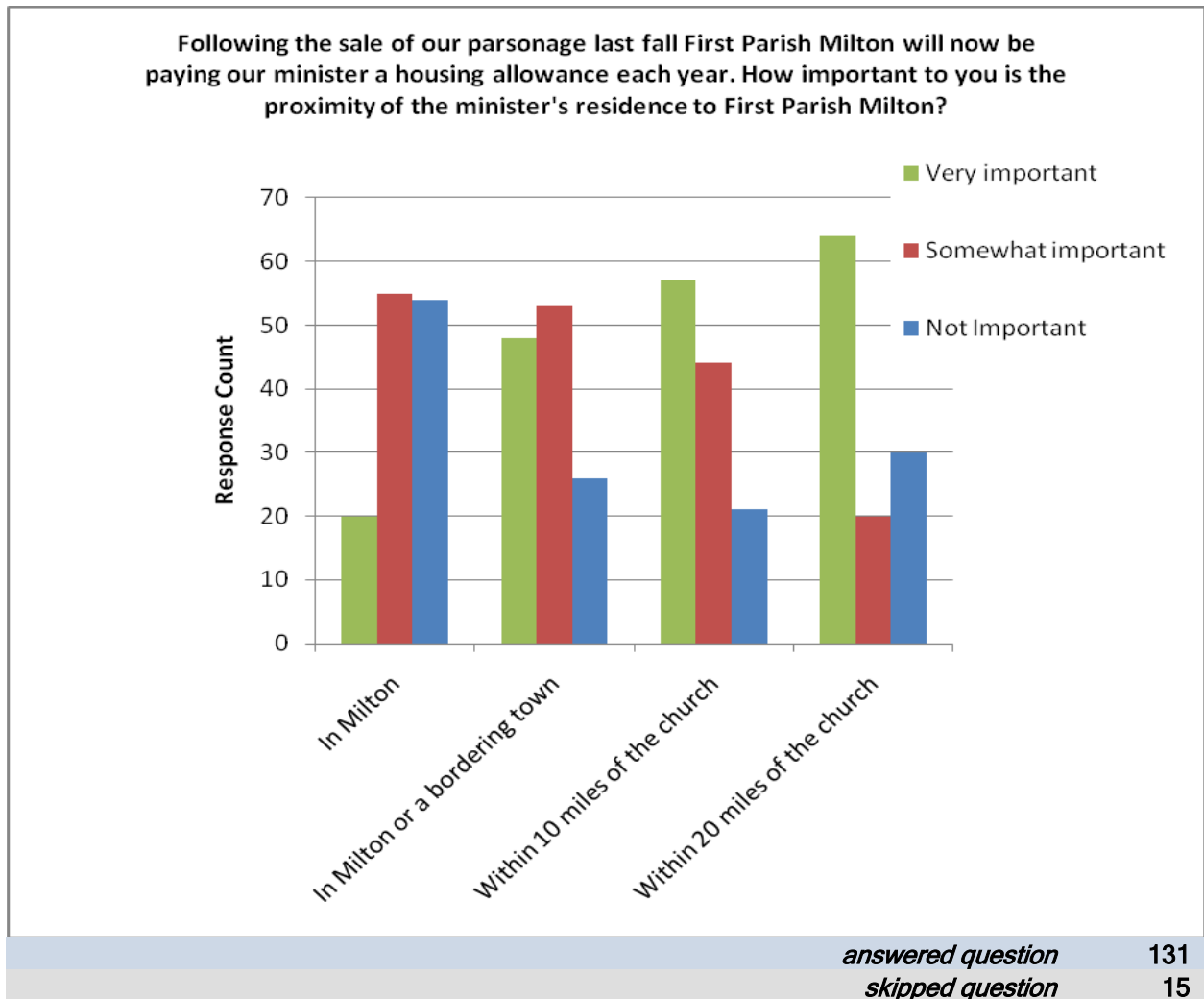
Question 37 – Respondents’ Preference for the Minister’s Attributes



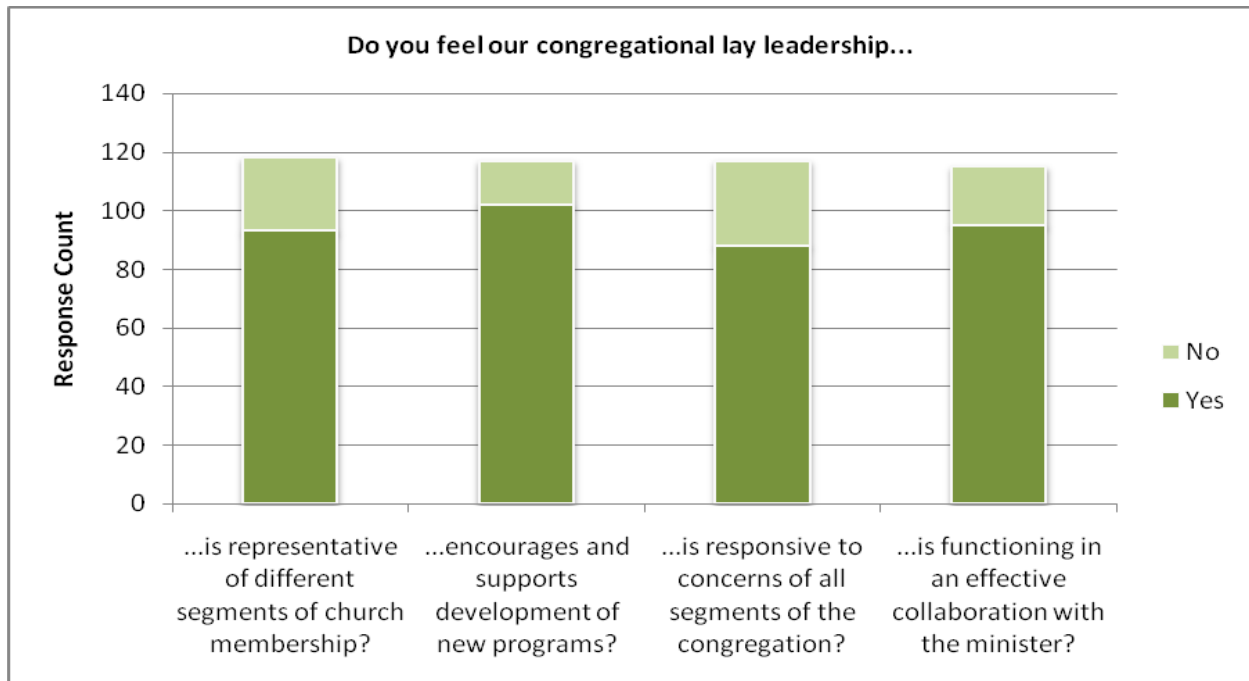
*Asked as: A person of color/member of historically marginalized ethnic/cultural group?

<i>answered question</i>	131
<i>skipped question</i>	15

Question 38 – Respondents’ Preference for the Minister’s Residence Location



Question 39 – Respondents’ Views on the Lay Leadership



answered question 120
skipped question 26

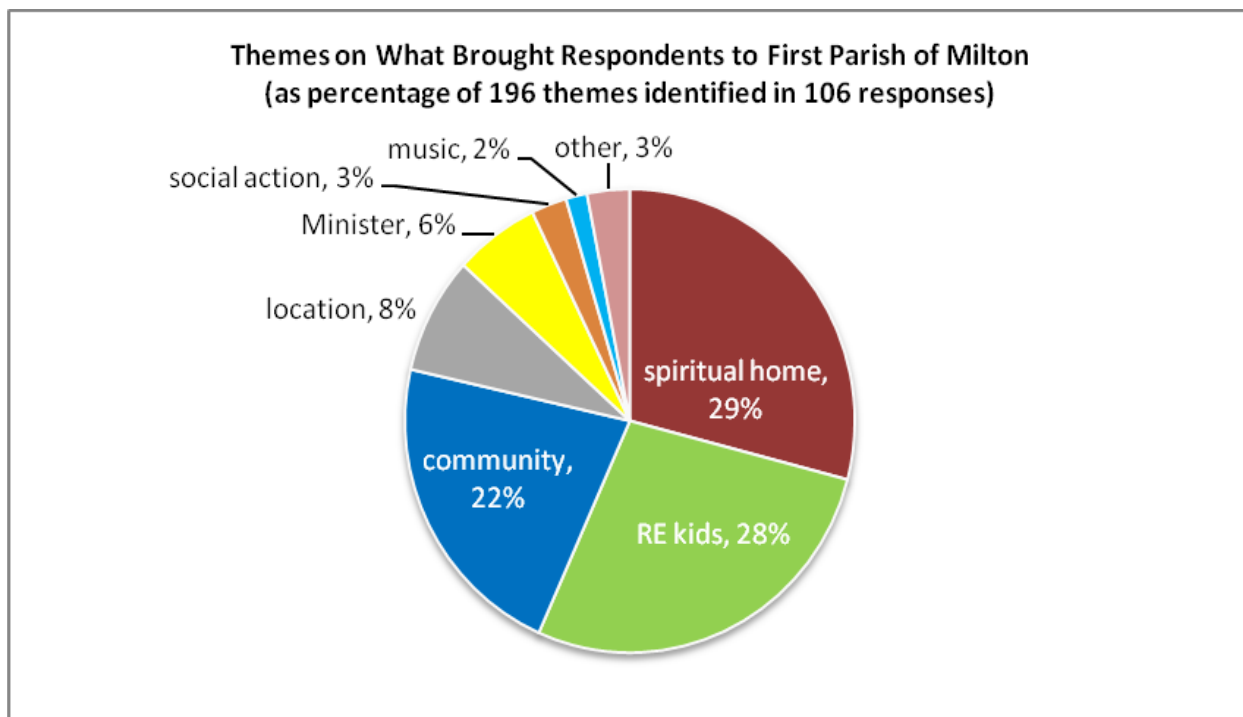
Other (please specify)

- 1 seems ok to me but I am not part of the lay leadership. I guess I am looking for the new minister, someone with experience and a sense of what is possible to guide us.
- 2 no idea
- 3 There has been a significant change in the collaboration between the minister and lay leadership since Parisa's departure. I think it is an important factor in calling the new minister in light of the importance of lay leadership in 1st Parish.
- 4 too new to be able to answer
- 5 From a management point of view we need fewer committees and more streamlined processes...and committees should not feel they need to reinvent the wheel or do something different just because the membership or chairmanship changes
- 6 I'm not sure we can be responsive to everyone unless people bring forward their ideas and there is consideration
- 7 Too frequently tries to "reinvent the wheel" rather than finding solutions that work and staying with them
- 8 In the past, yes, but no so much with the interim minister.
- 9 I don't know
- 10 do not feel my Milton UU experience is consistent enough to comment
- 11 The lay leadership is amazing.
- 12 i don't think I have enough knowledge and experience to answer these questions.
- 13 There isn't any support for divorced families and there are a lot at first parish.
- 14 unknown
- 15 don't know to answer
- 16 I'm not sure I have adequate information to answer this question.
- 17 Honestly, I'm unsure how to answer these questions
- 18 I don't know enough to respond.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 19 Q37 - I can't really answer Enthusiastic vs Comfortable. None of those traits matter. It just depends on who the person is. Q38 I'd prefer Milton, but at least want them close by. Q39 I haven't been involved enough in the last couple of years to know.
- 20 I don't really know enough about this yet to have a strong opinion either way.
- 21 I wish there was a "Not Sure" answer on these
- 22 Would like to see stronger connection between worship and music similar to What Parisa had built.
- 23 I am assuming you meant with Parisa, not Hank. The answers would be different in some cases.
- 24 I feel the trustees need to be "freshened" to be in touch with the congregation and representative (I believe this is starting to happen)

Question 40 – What Brought Respondents to First Parish



What first brought you to First Parish Milton?

- 1 Search of Community, a house of worship to bring my children up in
- 2 Children's religious education
- 3 My mother.
- 4 Moved to Milton, Unitarian beliefs.
- 5 Our children, we wanted them to have a good religious background and foundation.
- 6 RE for our kids
- 7 wife
- 8 Looking for a church that reflects our family values.
- 9 We used to go to All Souls Braintree but they didn't have many kids but we switched to Milton.
- 10 We were at the UU church in Dedham and moved to Milton.
- 11 My parents first brought me into First Parish when i was young.
- 12 looking for youth programming and sense of community
- 13 RE and community for my child, OWL, liberal values

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 14 Family
- 15 neighborhood uu church
- 16 wanted to expose young daughter to a liberal, unbiased church community
- 17 spiritual community to raise our children in
- 18 A search for a church where I could explore spiritual growth in a supportive, caring community.
- 19 Wanting inspiration, support, and grounding for myself during a difficult time. And wanting to find the kind of religious community I always knew was possible, but had never found.
- 20 My spouse and I were looking for a church for our young children and ourselves that was not traditional Protestant Christian but that had strong liberal Christian foundation and an engaging RE program and thoughtful and though provoking worship and sermons.
- 21 I was seeking community, a spiritual home, and formal and informal religious education for my children.
- 22 my parents, I stay because of the peace and purpose it gives me
- 23 I was born Unitarian but felt alienated by the drift of the denomination. The cross and Bible inscriptions in the meetinghouse drew me back.
- 24 Prior experience in an UU church, UU values and community.
- 25 Parisa
- 26 The RE program and the music.
- 27 Community and education program for children.
- 28 children, community
- 29 place for the kids to find community and spiritual values
- 30 UU background. Liberal Humanist. Moved back to Milton recently (born here).
- 31 location
- 32 I wanted a church community that would not impose their beliefs on me, and wanted to expose my child to that kind of church.
- 33 A search for a church which shared our social beliefs and that had a good sunday school program
- 34 Sought a new faith community and had had positive UU relationship elsewhere.
- 35 My children
- 36 Laurie Bilyeu. I interviewed LB during the minister search at my previous UU church. Having moved to Milton, I saw her picture in the Milton Times and learned she was about to be installed at FPM and came to check it out. Stayed.
- 37 community.
- 38 previous church's bad choice for minister
- 39 Parisa
- 40 I was looking for community for my family and me, and wanted a spiritual refuge.
- 41 It felt like a church that I could belong to having grown up without any religion at all.
- 42 Religious education for my pre-school age children
- 43 knew the minister / close location
- 44 a friend and the concept that our interfaith family could go to Sunday services together without having to be something that we are not.
- 45 A place to instill values in our children.
- 46 My spouse
- 47 Looking for a place to raise our children in the UU tradition combined with social action goals . Was impressed by Parisa's leadership and moral compass during difficult times in our Town.
- 48 A reputation for excellent ministry and a healthy church system.
- 49 The RE program for my kids and closer to my home than my previous church
- 50 RE classes and the music
- 51 Wanting a sense of community and thought provoking conversation, fellowship. welcoming people
- 52 Moved to Milton

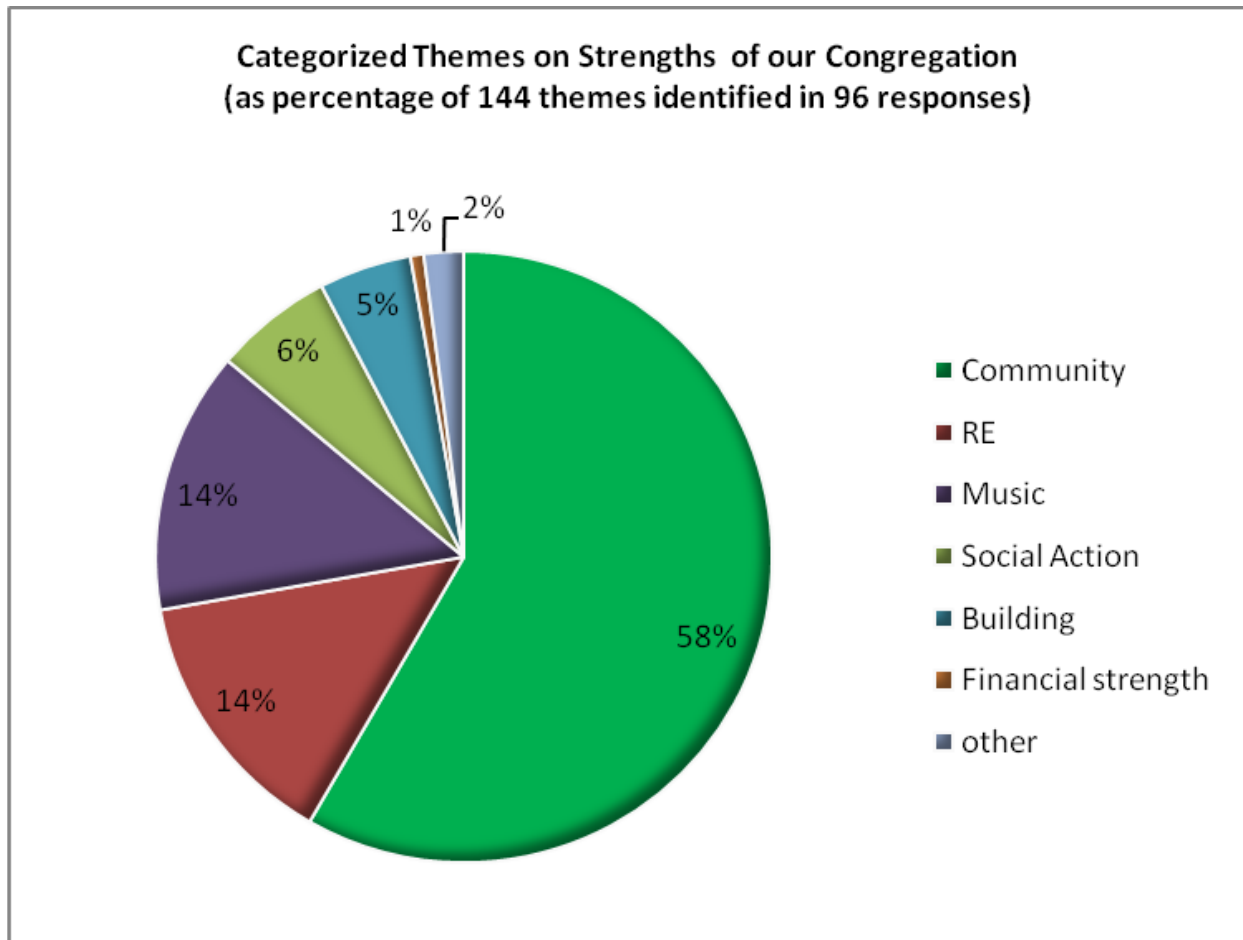
First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 53 I wanted to provide my children with a spiritual community that was not the Catholic church where my ex husband and I were raised.
- 54 Moved to Milton; left another UU congregation.
- 55 Reading information on the website, it was in my hometown, and it had a more open theology than the protestant christian denominations I used to attend
- 56 The need for a supportive, spiritual community.
- 57 The R.E. director. She and I were together for 5 years, and when she left and I was there by myself.
- 58 A search for community in Milton and a welcoming parish.
- 59 The church was recommended to us by other Members in town.
- 60 UU church in Milton was one of the factors for relocating to Milton
- 61 1 - A community built around shared progressive values of social justice, human rights, volunteering / service, and personal growth, without religious dogma at its core. 2 - An established and active congregation with a lot of children's programming. 3 - A place to celebrate holidays and rites of passage.
- 62 Our children and the liberal religious/spiritual/human values of UU
- 63 Religious education.
- 64 Religious education program.
- 65 Our young child expressed an interest in attending church, so we sought out a church with a tradition of welcoming people of all faiths and backgrounds.
- 66 We wanted to raise our kids in the UU environment. Nether of us were raised in a UU church. The kids grew up and we stayed.
- 67 Community, my children, looking for a place to think about issues larger than my own life and support my efforts to raise moral, thoughtful children.
- 68 I was looking for community.
- 69 I moved to the area, leaving my previous area pretty abruptly. I was already a UU, and wanted to keep denominational connection. You also have a CUUPS group, and that was a big plus.
- 70 seeking community and spirituality
- 71 Religious education for my children.
- 72 A place where my values are resonant and reflected back to me in many ways. I did love what was being preached and how the service fell together.
- 73 New minister (Parisa) and the death of good friend.
- 74 My kids. I am a lifelong UU but needed to get them in RE. Once I saw Parisa, I was hooked.
- 75 Needing a church to tend to the spiritual growth of me and my family.
- 76 Spiritual and ethical basis for my kids education
- 77 We moved to Milton and were affiliated with another UU church in our former community. Laurie drew us in and it was an easier commute.
- 78 My Parents were members. I also wanted place for re for my kids
- 79 a religious home for our grade school child
- 80 Holiday services and children's re program.
- 81 Religious education for my children; opportunity to be in community with like-minded people.
- 82 I first came looking for RE for my children.
- 83 A sense of community, Laurie's sermons.
- 84 shared UU values, social justice orientation, desire for connection with others who share my values, desire for UU values to influence my child
- 85 My friends recommended we try it. Our children were young and we wanted to find a spiritual home.
- 86 Was looking for an organization of open-minded individuals with whom I shared certain spiritual values, cared about the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of all, not afraid of a little change, and welcoming to new-comers.
- 87 Already a UU, moved to the area and was seeking a spiritual home.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 88 I needed a community to do my spiritual work in.
- 89 Wife
- 90 looking for a community of liberal thinkers; looking for an RE program for our children (1 and 3)
- 91 I was UU already and I moved to Milton, so I automatically came to FPM. Also I had children who needed to be in RE.
- 92 My Kids
- 93 Had been a UU for many years before I moved to Milton. Sermons are very important to me and Laurie Bilyou gave sermons that reached me.
- 94 Desire for my children (and my wife, hi honey!) to have a spiritual home.
- 95 Wanted to go to a UU church in the community I live in.
- 96 long standing interest in spiritual questions, coupled by wanting religious education for our child
- 97 Sense of community.
- 98 We were looking for a church community to be a part of before growing our family. We wanted to raise children in a religious environment, but one that was different than the one in which we were raised.
- 99 Wanting a community that would stimulate my thinking about values and the way I live my life, a desire for community, wanting my child to have a church community.
- 100 My partner
- 101 We were looking for a caring and thoughtful context in which our children would receive support to address the "big" questions of life. Friends (who also became members) told us about First Parish, and the beautiful interior and richness of the music program were important early "hooks" for me. One of my earliest memories was becoming acutely aware of the ticking clock during quiet periods.
- 102 Wedding, funeral
- 103 A friend who attended and the RE program
- 104 Friends
- 105 Seeking a place to raise my kids in a community of others I respected, and a place to do social action with others
- 106 Invitation of a member; Choir

Question 41 – Congregational Strengths as Reported by Respondents



What current strengths does our congregation possess that you would like to either see maintained or developed in the immediate future?

- 1 Lay worship assistance, great RE programs, social justice- the bigger picture
- 2 Musical excellence, encouragement of participation by empty nesters and seniors, thought-provoking sermons, fertile ground for intellectual and spiritual growth.
- 3 -Open to all people
-Accepting
-AWESOME!
- 4 Choir
Organist
Interested parents
Willingness to try new programs
Willingness of most of the congregation to accept new people
- 5 Our church has a strong Christian tradition that appeals to me. I would like to see it carried forward in the future. I also respect the diversity of the congregation and appreciate and respect it. UU is an open religion and searching for the truth is important to the congregation and should be maintained and developed.
- 6 Developing open-mindedness and critical observation and examination of ideas to be able to learn from all those we encounter, especially in the kids but also in adults.
- 7 Open-mindedness, welcoming of all people, broad range of activities that work to include people all all ages and backgrounds.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 8 We have a dedicated group of parishoners who are willing to give a lot of time and mental energy to making First Parish a great church to belong to. I worry that this is not sustainable long term and think we need to find a way to draw in more people to participate or maybe draw more people in to the church who are willing to participate beyond just coming to Sunday services.
- 9 Our congregation has a strong sense of community, great youth program and a good music program that i would like to see maintained.
- 10 enthusiasm, community, interest in connecting, interest in social action, liberal viewpoints
- 11 Youth group and youth chat
- 12 Sense of community. RE program, teen program.
- 13 this is a great community and we have had great called and interim ministers. there is very strong lay leadership and the more we bring guests to services, our congregation grows
- 14 I think the primary strength of the congregation has always been that members of the Parish are caring, loving and a terrific group of people. Maintaining that strong core and, at the same time, growing it is one of the primary challenges we face.
- 15 Strong commitment to one another, and to creating a safe, sacred place for people to develop and follow their own beliefs about the world and how we should be in it. I would love to see us develop more individual and collective voices and get ourselves to shake things up inside-- helping us be bolder in the world. There still seems to be some collective timidity around this, and I think we can help people understand that and work right through it into a more exciting action and leadership role in the world.
- 16 Many wonderful people, great food and social events
See below--we have many people willing to do a lot of work, but I feel we don't use their time and energies wisely
- 17 First Parish does a marvelous job of making visitors feel welcome. I would love to see it extend that welcome by having a larger role in the outside community to introduce others to the denomination and expand membership.
- 18 We possess many people who care, we need more to accomplish more
We need to help direct people to ways they can help
- 19
 1. Preserving the Unitarian Christian heritage and theology.
 2. A will to do social justice in a more organized fashion (but a need to get more organized).
 3. "Earth-centered spirituality".
 4. A largely harmonious integration of theism and humanism.
- 20 A stronger emphasis on community with more sharing of joys & sorries. Stronge intellectual & spiritual stimulation from the pulpet.
- 21 The acceptance of all people regardless of religious background, sexual identity, etc.
Sharing of fellowship both in and outside of church
- 22 Strength of community and caring.
- 23 community support for one another and their passions
- 24 intelligence, commitment, great music, liberal and intellectual values
- 25 Community and social action even though I am not very involved. Shared fellowship and overall kindness and respect towards each other.
- 26 A great sense of caring for other members of the congregation. A willingness to participate in the congregation. And, a strong sense of community, both within the congregation and in the communities we live in.
- 27 I think our church has a strong sense of community and is also very good at welcoming new people to our church.
- 28 Not sure what our collective strengths and talents are, actually! As a community, we need to get to know each other better.
- 29 Openness and inclusiveness; music; quality of sermons
- 30 Support and encouragement for music in worship.
Intelligent, engaged congregation.
- 31 liberalism, freedom of expression, a sense of comfort and "fun". Accepting of all.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 32 Our current congregation has many dedicated, compassionate, and resourceful people from a variety of backgrounds.
My perspective is that this composition is a strength for all who are willing to participate. While Parisa was a rare breed of leader, she also had a solid cast of characters willing to contribute.
This has always been important and will always be important. Any Minister who can recognize that strength and harness it will be an asset.
- 33 The welcome spirit and inclusiveness of all kinds of people is a huge strength, and one that keeps me coming back.
The RE program is amazing, but I wish we could find the funding to pay someone to run it and rely less on volunteers.
- There is a wealth of musical talent in the congregation that could be utilized/celebrated, and even paid for. Why not pay them instead of the soloists? Could we hire the soloists for xmas or Easter if we don't have the talent within the congregation?
Why not bridge into the gospel world more and connect with our neighbors of other races?
Why not include more other types of popular, folk and traditional music like we did in years past?
Though I love many of the hymns, many of us want the music to broaden out of the god-focused ones. And the choir seems over its head at times -- can the selections be a bit more singable? Can we, the congregation, weigh in about what we'd like to hear? (Beyond this survey?)
- 34 R.E.
OWL
- 35 A balance in the discussion and practice of various religious faith's traditions and holidays.
- 36 A broad range of ages and religious backgrounds. A deep commitment to the church. Pride in the church, its history and its mission.
- 37 The congregation seems to have many dedicated individuals who are willing to freely give of their time to assist in the running of the church and helping others who may require it.
- 38 1) We have some very dedicated lay leadership members for which we are very fortunate but it seems like it is always the same group of people -just shuffling their chairs . We need to get new folks involved in leadership positions. 2) Our campus is beautiful but a financial burden to keep up, we need to see how we can use this great asset in a way to better support the cost of it's upkeep and to welcome new folks into the facility.
- 39 Healthy church system -- good communication, thoughtful worship, excellent lay leadership. And in the recent past, outstanding professional ministry.
- 40 Inclusive, Social Action oriented, RE for K-12 and an active youth group
- 41 Re program is strong and attractive to new members even though my kids never liked going to them.
Music program is very strong and should continue to be developed but not necessarily in the same form.
The building and grounds should be maintained at a high level because of its historical value to the community.
- 42 n/a
- 43 Community - small group ministry was really important to me in previous parish.
- 44 We seem to genuinely enjoy each other and celebrate our children at all ages.
- 45 Dedicated, active members who work together.
- 46 good children's programs. a sense of fun. activities for all ages.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 47 Financial
Good mix of long time members and new ones.
So many members can say clearly how they have benefited from church membership
Beautiful space
Commitment to music
Strong Caring Committee
- 48 I am most interested in the community as "friends up the block" and I know that I miss the friendships I had as a kid. That said, I would like to see a more vibrant and educational experience under the Adult Religious Education purview. I view a monthly meeting where we get to listen to a speaker and then interact with them. I also see this as a "game night" where we could play games.
- 49 I think our congregation has a caring, intelligent and engaged group of individuals who work tirelessly to make every Sunday happen. There is a richness of talents among the members and potential to accomplish even more.
- 50 I think there is a strong sense of community at First Parish. That said, I decided to take some time off over the last year for a multitude of reasons - some personal and some related to the church itself.
- 51 great people
- 52 Open and welcoming to people of diverse beliefs.
- 53 strong group of leaders
enthusiastic participation
welcoming to new members to become involved
inclusive
open mindedness
ability to function with and without ministerial input
- 54 I love our members. I'd love to reach to build our membership beyond Milton.
- 55 Music program.
Creative worship design.
- 56 I would hope to see the music program continue to grow under Tim Steele. I am heartened to see that the R.E. teachers are often parent volunteers.
- 57 The sense of community.
- 58 I think there are a lot of wonderful people at FP. We need to nurture our community.
- 59 There are a number of very talented people in a variety of ways in this congregation. I'd like to see those talents encouraged tapped into a bit more.
- 60 Our music program is phenomenal. The choir is pretty tight-knit too, which is really cool.
- 61 Many talented, kind and generous people. Lot's of good ideas and energy - if only we could harness that so everyone is involved, even in a small way (if they want to be)
- 62 Sense of community is strong. Caring for each other within our community is strong.
- 63 I have felt a real rejuvenation this fall that I was not at all expecting. Last year was tough and the year seemed to end on some kind of a sour note. But people came back and the sense of genuine, caring community was palpable.
This might sound elitist, but I find people at FP to be smart and capable, and I appreciate that. Much has been accomplished, and this should be recognized and celebrated. With this pool of talent and intelligence, I am hopeful we can embrace bold change that needs to happen not just in our little corner of the world, but everywhere if the institution of religion will survive. This is what Parisa was trying to tell us in so many ways, and she was absolutely right. We must be smart and brave enough to have courage to change and evolve.
- 64 Friendly group. Active Youth. Great choir.
- 65 AMAZING people and wonderful lay participation. The lay services always let us get to know each other better, as people.
Also, there are so many talented musicians in the church.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

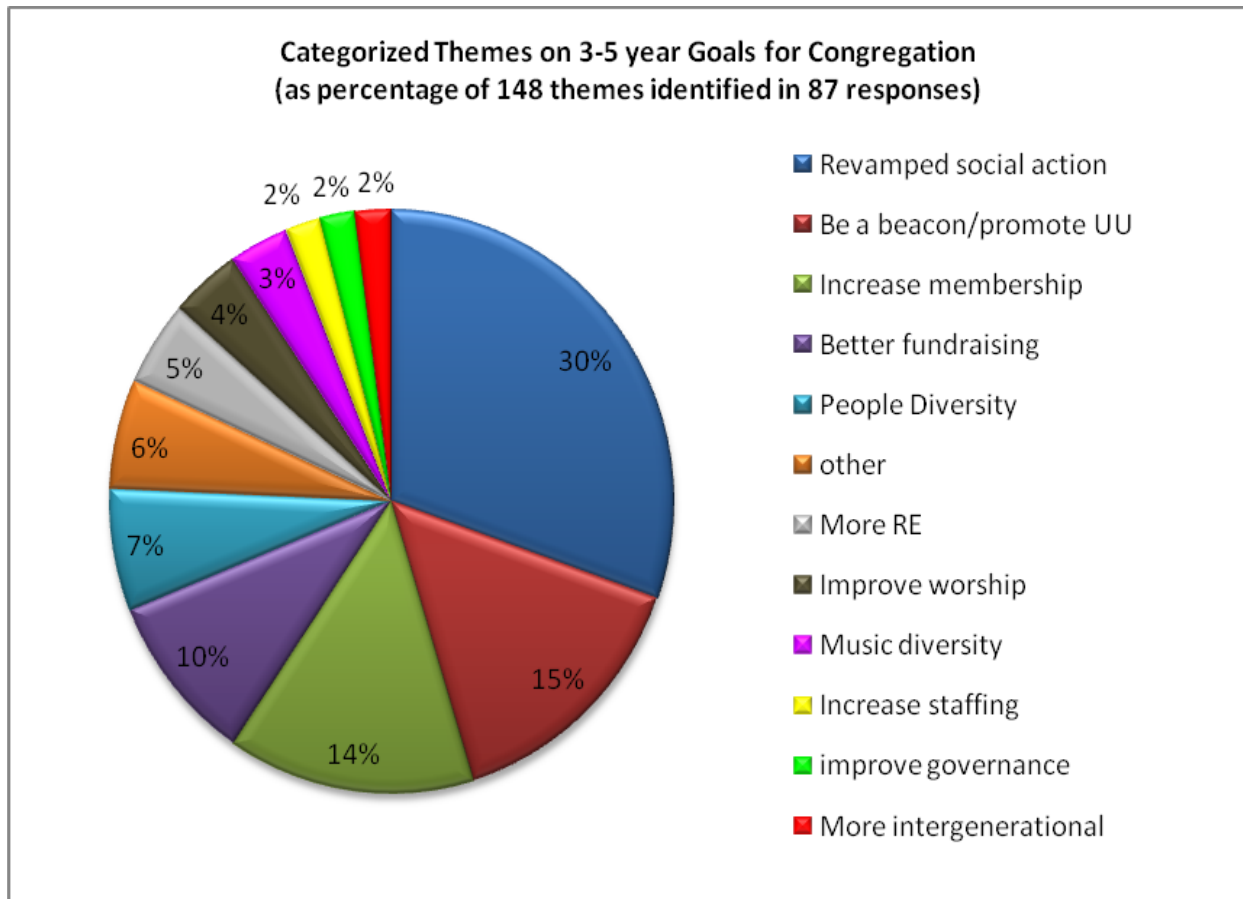
- 66 Diversity in music that will move all people and bring in different people.
Workshops outside of worship to stimulate intellectual rigor.
Tap into the congregation - people want to participate, be of use, contribute. Encourage interaction.
Let people know that it's ok not to be on every committee. Just coming to church is ok especially when life is crazy or you're struggling to get by.
Compassion begins with self. We need to take care of ourselves so we can take care of our church community, the community beyond our doors and the world. One of the reasons people leave is burnout.
We need to grow the "sacred space" in worship. Why should anyone take the time to come Sun am if they can get what they need going to yoga class instead? Yes - the old WIFM factor...what's in it for me
- 67 a participating congregation
- 68 We are and should continue to be:
-sociable
-caring
-dedicated
-thoughtful (in the literal sense of the word)
-smart
We should develop our:
-commitment to maintaining our budget at the highest possible level
-stature/presence in the community

-ability to encourage folks to join
-commitment to living by our values and not just pay lip-service to them
- 69 Social justice and music
- 70 diversity of beliefs, and acceptance of a wide range of beliefs, strong committee structure that gets things done
- 71 Curiosity and dedication.
- 72 Sense of community; committed core members; strong values around caring and social justice; value of the history of the church and its campus.
- 73 I think we have a great RE program. I'd like to see more adult RE opportunities. Children's church is great.
- 74 the sense of community, openness to all and good listening skills.
- 75 wonderful community
- 76 Lay leadership is strong but needs developing outside of the "usual suspects." Music is wonderful and valued by all for those participating as well as those listening. Small group ministries have been useful for me and might strengthen the community.
- 77 Welcoming congregation.
Caring for each other inside, as well as outside, the congregation.
- 78 Small but devoted lay leadership and core committee membership. History of strong and positive congregational relationship with previous minister. Strong ties to community.
- 79 The deep care we have for each other.
- 80 Strong children's RE, youth group, sense of community
- 81 Enthusiastic lay leaders
People who care about their church and it's well being
People who care about each other
A great RE program
A wonderful Youth Group and Youth Chat program that are the reasons my kids come to church
- 82 We have a lot of creative talent that it would be great to showcase. The congregation is very engaged in town matters (town meeting, library, senior center, etc) and it would be nice to hear about their work. The town's social services program is based at church and everyone would be very aware of that work, WHY it is at FPM and what should be, as a congregation be doing to support it.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 83 Good RE program
Good music
Good social interaction and community involvement
Good staff and physical plant and grounds
- 84 Small group ministries are missed by many, as are the adult ed. workshops - Common Hearth.
RE and Youth groups seem to be thriving and the choir is strong.
- 85 Trust in each other. Ability to communicate about difficult issues. Track record of addressing challenging questions in ways that build, rather than tear down, the community. Lots of smart, committed people. Great building. Endowment.
- 86 Strong sense of community. The connections and caring are very evident.
Mostly positive attitudes.
- 87 engaged and very intelligent and committed lay leaders
abundant musical talent
very caring and responsive community on a pastoral level
- 88 Open-mindedness and friendliness.
- 89 -
- 90 Very open minded
- 91 Our rich music program, our vibrant R.E. program, our beautiful and historic meeting house, and our energetic process of welcoming newcomers are all great strengths that I would like to see maintained and expanded.
- 92 Core group of lay leaders
- 93 I am impressed by the congregation's response to members and friends in need.
There is a strong sense of community that could become even stronger and more widespread.
Many members are heavily involved in activities professionally and as volunteers that address community needs and social justice issues, and there are specific social justice projects that are taken on by the congregation; but there could be more congregational focus and a more coherent approach.
- 94 We enjoy each other and like to engage in conversations on a wide range of topics
- 95 We have some great members--really down-to-earth wonderful folks who work very hard to make FP a great place to be. The membership is our strength and I would like to see us develop more members, to share our good news and to have a larger pool to draw on to make things run smoothly.
We have a beautiful building, which I see as a strength but also a liability. I'd like to see some of it modernized and made more accessible to the community at large.
- 96 Warmth and friendliness.

Question 42 – 3-5 Year Goals for Congregation as Reported by Respondents



What are the main things you would like the congregation to accomplish or get involved in within the next three to five years?

- 1 Planned parenthood.
Lowering divorce rates-- marriage enrichment- support of these unions
Artwork in the link every month
- 2 Musical, spiritual and intellectual activities...more and better
- 3 Not sure.
- 4 Adult education
Increase number of small ministry groups
Extend involvement with local different social and racial groups
- 5 Work together with the new minister to continue to build a strong church. Work more on the RE program to give our youth a solid religious foundation. Continue to expand church membership. Work hard on retaining existing members.
- 6 I'd like the congregation to accomplish focus on what is most important, and give-up the notion that we can do everything and be everything that is important to our spiritual growth as individuals.
I'd like us to get more involved with the several organizations nearby that already have great social action programs and be known for augmenting their reach and effectiveness.
- 7 Bring more community involvement and social action inside our walls.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 8 I think we should do more service trips as a congregation. I also think we should have more people attend the General Assemblies to represent our congregation. It was sad that last year when it was in Rhode Island and we didn't even have a flag. I feel like we should also somehow get involved with the outside community of Milton more. I think we could get more people to join the church and positively affect the community. I feel like a lot of people are UU but just don't know it.
- 9 1. I would like to see the youth group have a sense of a mission, a sense of purpose, that the kids can rally around. What is the purpose of the group? Why would kids want to join and participate? There is a social aspect to the group, which is important and great, but I look for something beyond that.
2. I think being a UU is great. In Milton the church is well known but not really understood, I feel. Personal connection to parishoners is important to getting new people involved but I feel like it would benefit the church to get more people who attend services regularly and who participate beyond Sunday service. Seems like there are a lot of regulars who have been supporting the church for a long time, they could use some help. Also, Milton is a racially diverse community but that is not reflected in our membership. People come from different traditions and its not always easy to come to a new church but I don't get the sense that there is much effort in this area.
3.
- 10 None
- 11 increased social action- perhaps for national and international projects
- 12 More parties lol
- 13 Would like to see more connections with greater Milton and regional communities.
- 14 - mobilize to work to support gun control efforts, to welcome immigrants & refugees, to protect the environment, and to promote efforts toward ending armed conflicts.
-expand social action efforts in neighboring communities
- 15 I would like us to be a bastion of community dialogue about important social issues: income inequality, gun control, Black Lives matter. Not to tell people how to be, but to hold difficult conversations int he world and help people think through difficult conversations. I would like us to open up our doors and hearts more to be active in the world with neighbors in Mattapan and surrounding high- stress communities.
- 16 Social action
Streamline committees and how much time the church demands of its members
Find a renewed sense of community and acceptance and cohesion
Become financially secure/self-sufficient
Remember its Unitarian roots--including through RE. In RE I believe children need a foundation from which they can then explore as they get older. I feel our children do not get that initial grounding.
- 17 I would also like to see opportunities for bringing older members together with children and young adults. One reason we joined First Parish was to increase the presence of other adults in the lives of our children, and we would welcome intergenerational activities and programs for members and nonmembers.
- 18 intergenerational activities that accomplish both fun and /or social action
Continue to develop leadership to replace those who are aging and over worked
Get a new minister who can inspire and lead
Continue to become more financially viable
Help our community in some specific way
- 19 Streamline and rationalize committee governance.
- 20 Grow a vibrant and engaged congregation.
- 21 Growing the congregation.
- 22 getting to know one another across generations.
this would help support one another's passions.
- 23 more and different social action
increase membership
visibility in the community

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 24 1) Greater outreach into the community. 2) A social action campaign that is continuous throughout year and not just a one day event (ie, the mother's day walk for peace). 3) Greater volunteerism within the parish (however this will require the church to challenge the congregation with new and exciting things to get them involved).
- 25 Tangible food support of Milton's pantry -- even consider growing some on the property (a symbol of creative energy to passersby). Collaborate/partner with an urban church. Sponsor international refugees. Promote more social action opportunities. Instill the "value" of FP in more people so that pledging is viewed as bestowing generosity, from a wellspring of gratitude, not a burden.
- 26 more social justice programs and outreach both within and beyond Milton.
- 27 Providing ways and means for intelligent and engaged congregation to do some good beyond our walls
- 28 bringing in more people. Feels sad here. I want critical mass, and a pulpit full of engaged members. When people don't come, I don't want to come. Seems like the same ol same ol people. Same people (kids) who light the chalice. Same people who do readings, or sing solos. I want diversity within the church experience as well as in the pews.
- 29 More visibility in the community. Many Milton people do not even know about FP or the good work it does. I think the pews should be filled each Sunday, and if people knew about us, and what we believe, I think they would come.
Then, more good work! We do a good job inspiring social change from the congregation but we can do better.
More interesting and varied music. Music can be transformative and transcendent -- no reason it shouldn't be each week.
More colors of people! Though, maybe that's just a UU thing, we'll always be mostly white?? I'm not giving up on that.
- 30 deeper spiritual themes
social action
increased, varied membership
- 31 Continue to provide a spiritual home for interfaith families.
- 32 Attract a more diverse congregation.
- 33 Environmental issues that affect the planet, such as population control and global warming.
- 34 Welcome new members
Find new sources of revenue
Diversify the membership
- 35 Keep on the current track.
- 36 Build a stronger church community, do more social action as a church community, become a Green Sanctuary, offer services at nontraditional times like Friday nights or Sunday nights
- 37 I don't know because I haven't been involved in the church for awhile
- 38 n/a
- 39 Refugee resettlement
Young adult issues
- 40 I would like to see more people of color coming to First Parish and staying. I would like to give people committee alternatives for involvement. I have carved out this space for myself with RE and helping out with events but I feel like it's discouraged.
- 41 Growing diversity of congregation--not just in terms of race and ethnicity, but also in terms of sexual orientation, age, income levels, and more.
- 42 more social justice work in Milton and neighboring towns.
- 43 At least 100 adults still in Meetinghouse when the children leave.
- 44 See above.
- 45 I would like to see the First Parish achieve the level of funding and finances that I know it can achieve. There is a lot of capacity among our membership, but we have not had the leadership to reach our potential. I would like to see the church staffed at the levels that a church like FP requires, and with the ability to hire the best expertise available. The selection of the right minister will help achieve these goals, and reach our full potential as a community religious and social leader in Milton.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 46 I think the financial future of the church is important and I think we need to chose a Minister who can lead from the front on this issue - including the task of "making the asks" when necessary. That foundation is critical to everything the church does or can hope to do.
- 47 find and settle with a new minister
establish and engage in weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual priorities to get to know each other
conceive and pilot a small program of events that will interest members (with and without children), potential members (with and without children), and the community at large
- 48 Continue to offer a variety of programming like social get-togethers, holiday activities, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- 49 sustainable financial support
more external social action justice commitments
- 50 The sky is the limit. I'd like to see us become more a part of the Massachusetts community, even world community.
More opportunities together outside of church.
- 51 I'd like to see us have a strong salient image to the community at large. Have community understand the principles we live.
- 52 Growth. Also, encouraging young parents or new members to get involved with committees.
- 53 I would like to see more social action programs and more involvement in the Milton/Boston area.
- 54 I really think we need to get involved in sustainable living efforts as part of our social justice. I would love to see us get involved with Habitat and the tiny house movement, and to start a community garden.
- 55 More social action -- particularly the UU Urban Ministry
- 56 Real interfaith social justice that are clearly connected to living our Seven Principles. We need to support a minister who will spend time forming relationships to work for peace and a better world. Pope Francis is making it easier for us to imagine boldness, and we need to follow his lead.
Parisa also had a motto that we never really had the chance to live into: deepen and simplify. We need to hatch a vision from a sense of prioritization and actually stick with it for three to five years!
- 57 a more robust offerings of social action activities other than Father Bill's and Jericho Road. a service trip.
- 58 Hire a DRE, bring on anther UU seminary intern, and plant a garden, possibly in conjunction with the UCC church next door.
Having a dedicated DRE would improve the educational opportunities for our kids.
Having an intern would lighten the load for the minister and add a unique voice and perspective to services and events.
Planting a garden could help feed people, provide an opportunity for physical and spiritual work AND join us closer together.
- 59 more people in church
Diverse music in worship, lay led music
Return of a children's choir
Educational talks, workshops, etc for the Milton community.
- 60 To reduce the cost of "programs" to help balance the budget without dependence on the endowment,
- 61 We need to:
- become free from operational dependence on our endowment; the endowment should be used to maintain the buildings
- become a vibrant presence in the community -every thing from the Milton Concert series to housing/sharing/renting our space to other groups
.....being a leader in the social justice aspects of Milton - energy, conservation, environmental, etc.
- 62 More diverse social justice
- 63 more social action opportunities and more widespread participation by church members in social action activities

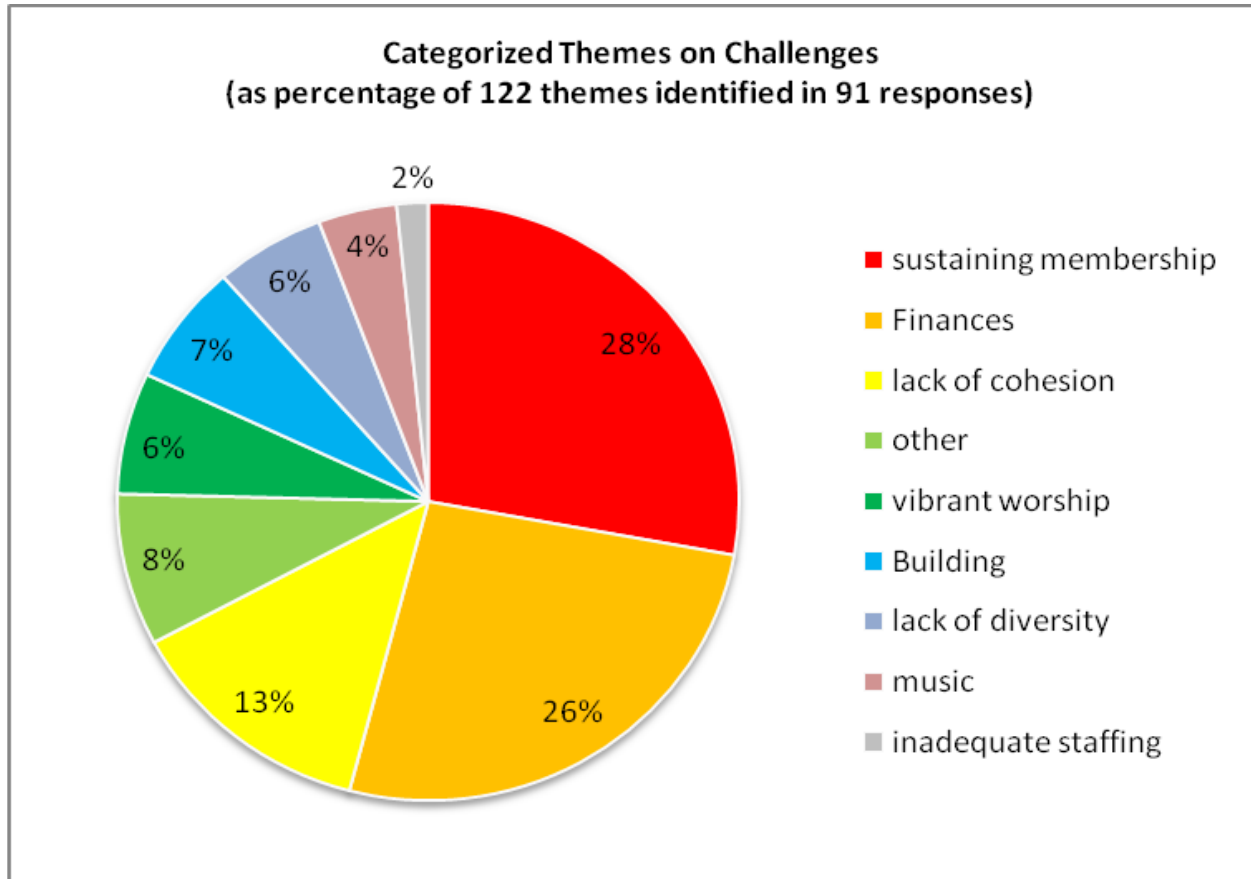
First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 64 Be more a part of the greater Milton community.
Get revitalized and re-energized with new leadership.
Do one annual community service or team building activity to connect people.
Explore the various ways we connect to the spiritual in everyday life.
- 65 Grow membership; expand reach into the community; expand programs (adult education, community-building activities; community reach); intellectually stimulating, spiritual worship.
- 66 I would like to see more service projects for kids (and families?) -- maybe a youth group service project trip...
- 67 Sorry, no thoughts here.
- 68 More social action and more outreach into the community beyond Milton. Unfortunately, we are often pressed for time and this is easier said than done.
- 69 I think we are at a place where our desire for increased programming and funding does not align with our congregation size. We either need to grow or figure out how to live within our means.
- 70 I would like us to be okay with who we are instead of paying lip service to the idea that we are going to go out and change the world as a church.
People come to FPM to be fed spiritually so that they can go out and make a difference in ways personal to them and their interests.
However, it would also be great if we could support an organization such as UU Mass action with their work to transform people's lives through legislation in four key areas: Mass Incarceration, Immigration, Poverty, and the Environment. Just choosing one small thing a year to do as a congregation could be a powerful way to live our values, to benefit others, and to transform society.
- 71 Improve finances/increase participation in giving
- 72 A strong and stable congregation that has increased in size
and is now able to financially support the church so that it is less reliant on the trust funds. Adult RE classes offered bimonthly or monthly.
- 73 1) International social justice!!! For example, UJME.
2) Provide funding to send delegates to GA. Be aware of the resolutions being voted on, and have a chance to vote, as a congregation, before GA.
3) Make sure at least one youth member attends GA.
4) Go back to having a DRE and a focus on religious education- youth AND adults.
- 74 Not yet sure
- 75 A stronger Social Action presence in the community and beyond our walls.
- 76 Become a beacon for the unchurched, especially young people who might never have had the benefit of a church community. Lead on social issues in our community and beyond. Reimagine the endowment as an engine to drive the church's mission (in addition to as a source of revenue for our programs). Set a goal of trying one "crazy" idea each year. First candidate: Tactical UU'ism, based on "tactical urbanism," which is a movement of small-scale actions (like turning a parking space into a park for a day, sticking some chairs in City Hall Plaza) to make life in cities more fun and enjoyable and to broaden people's perspective of the kinds of changes that are possible. Think about passing cookies out to people waiting for the T on a winter's day or taking part in a powerful, congregation-wide one-day social action project. Encourage bold, low-stakes experimentation in the hopes of getting people imagining big, bold ideas for change.
- 77 I think the main goal of the next few years should be to settle in with our new minister. I would like to see us offer more adult RE programming, with more vibrant happenings at church during the week: events where people learn and socialize, rather than just committee meetings.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 78 The congregation hoped to make an aspirational leap forward in the partnership with Temple Blue Hills. I think that particular vehicle wasn't the right one, but the desire to look and act in a "forward" manner is what we need to dig into and harness. Good things we have done recently which I think foster the right direction are things like small group ministry, Mother's Day March, and the musical innovation in 2013/14 of having much more non-choir music in the services. Things which include more people in worship are good. Things which bring people into worship on Sunday - a focus on "whole church" gathering, are good. I think we have flogged ourselves a bit on social action - kind of guilt ridden liberal activity. I think we would benefit from building and expanding our church community and our cohesiveness among one another. If we do that I think we will find our social action work ultimately takes off to a new level. But we have to put on our own oxygen masks first. We have to deeply care for and be connected with one another before we can do our best at turning outward.
- 79 More social justice.
- 80 - Growing membership of young adults and young families
- Additional social action projects to participate in
- Possibly expanding small group ministry program
- 81 Provide an environment of worship, family, learning and outreach where one can come to be spiritually fed, healed and renewed.
- 82 More collaboration between our music program/choir and those of other nearby religious communities.
A greater commitment to social action projects.
Progress in growing our congregation.
- 83 Increase pledges, balance budget, decrease drawdown from endowment, address physical plant repairs, become more visible in wider community
- 84 see above
- 85 Diverse offering of adult "education"
More sustained social action activities with wide age range participating
- 86 Be more involved in the larger world, getting outside our walls in a meaningful, impactful way that makes change for those around us but also changes us. Choose some social action work that we can really delve into and make "what FP does".
Modernize our building, especially the Link and the classrooms. The church structure is fine and beautiful.
Decorate more inside the church during worship--I miss the colorful celebratory banners that other churches have inside.
- 87 Take a stance on important social issues, possibly in the area of politics

Question 43 – Challenges as Reported by Respondents



What current church problems or challenges concern you?

- 1 Sustainability of our church. I think we should share our building with another congregation.
- 2 Obsession with being more racially and culturally diverse; we shouldn't try to be something we aren't, though we should be welcoming
- 3 Finding the right new minister
- 4 Need to upgrade the external appearance of the church
- 5 Find a longer term minister. Need one that is seriously committed to being a full time, long term minister.
- 6 a small to medium-sized congregation carrying the weight of caring for a historical building built for a larger congregation, with no extra funds left over for the social action and change we want to see in the world.
- 7 Our congregation is not growing by much and our support base (people-wise and monetarily) is not growing enough to support comfortably. We couldn't survive without the endowment. We need to grow our existing time and monetary commitment from existing people and find ways to bring in new people. I'm concerned that our RE classes have become much smaller over the past few years.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 8 The lack of multigenerational connection.
- 9 I would like to see the parish grow, which means attracting new members and keeping the people who do come engaged. I see a lot of families come and go. Why do they stop coming? I think that the UU faith is kind of open ended, and difficult to explain to others and that can make attracting new people more difficult.
- 10 None
- 11 membership does not appear to be thriving
music is less interesting
interim minister is not strong
cohesion in community is suffering
- 12 Funding
- 13 Membership, fundraising
- 14 The interim minister has not been successful. It will take time, effort and a strong leader, working with members of the Parish, to bring the Parish back to the level of interest, involvement and excitement about the future that we have had in the past. We worked hard for a long time to grow and strengthen the Parish, I would hate to see those efforts to have achieved only temporary results.
- 15 Hmm. Love this church. Think we could use some help being more bold and loud.
- 16 Constant engagement with major and disruptive decisions divides the congregation, is emotionally draining, takes precious time away from social action or spiritual development, is destructive of religious sentiment and spirituality and congregational cohesion. In my view, we need a period of relative stability for me to fully reengage with the church. I don't feel that the lay leadership or the prior minister appreciated the destructive aspects of what has gone on. This is an excellent survey and I thank all the members of the search committee for devoting so much time to helping us find our next minister.
- 17 Membership - the congregation must expand membership to remain vital.
- 18 integrate new people
- 19 1. Drawing down the endowment at an unsustainable pace to fund operating budgets that chronically exceed annual fundraising.
2. Lingering fault lines and feelings of distrust and alienation in the congregation, caused by divisive and mismanaged recent decision processes over the congregational covenant and merger with a Jewish congregation.
3. We have abandoned a lot of meaningful and spiritually soothing traditions over the last 20 years in what seems to me to be a constant and largely unsuccessful quest for novelty for its own sake. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."
- 20 Disengaged membership, insufficient pledge revenue.
- 21 I know a number of people who feel disconnected to the church during this interim period. I hope they will come back strongly once a new minister is installed.
- 22 The size of the congregation.
- 23 can't think of any at the moment
- 24 that there might not be a concerted effort to involve and welcome new people
- 25 The worship services are lacking. Would like to see them more spiritual and less "performance" oriented.
- 26 I'm always concerned about the budget and the ability to meet expenses, and the reliance on income from the endowment to meet operational expenses.
- 27 1) Lack of empowerment of the committees to do come up with new and bold ideas and implement them if they can gain the support of the congregation. 2) Lack of support for trying new things. There is too much of an attitude of "that's not how we've done it before" 3) Stronger support for Religious exploration. This is what brings in new families. 4) More transparency from the Parish Committee and Trustees regarding finances and what is being planned.
- 28 The Congregation needs to be aware of our history: U. U. values & the history of First Parish in Milton.
- 29 Too little engagement in all forms. Shrinking membership. Financially shaky?
- 30 Low pledges relative to perceived capacity to give
- 31 exclusively christian symbols(cross,scripture on walls)

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 32 I am not presently in touch on the current financial situation but 18 months or so ago, the lack of oversight/leadership from the trustees on expenses was disappointing to say the least. I would hope the new minister along with the Treasurer could give that important aspect continued examination to see that the Trustee's are actually doing their job.
- 33 I've heard that the music committee doesn't seem to be heard, and doesn't have much input in decisions made. I want them to be empowered to move the music in the direction that they and most congregants want it to go...
- 34 low energy, homogenous group
- 35 none
- 36 Insufficient diversity.
- 37 Careful management of the endowment.
- 38 Fundraising goals are not met. Facility is aging and will need more expensive work. We need to increase and diversify the membership .
- 39 The number of members I have not seen lately
- 40 I don't know of any. I have been too busy to attend regularly
- 41 attending with business of life, younger families
- 42 Lack of ethnic diversity.
- 43 Standoffishness or clique-y-ness among established members, leading to new folks feeling like outsiders. Takes a long time to "break into" FP.
- 44 Demise of the RE program.
- 45 Finances are always a problem. I think that we need more and consistent membership drives.
- 46 I think the congregation has a difficult time with the financial aspects of the church. The topic of money is one that most in the finance committee and the board are not comfortable dressing with the members. I think it stems from the fact that the previous minister never engaged in the financial aspects of the church nor in the direct fundraising of the annual fund. The reality is that people give to leadership, and there is lots of wealth and capacity to sustain First Parish at a higher and more efficient level. But the lack of involvement from the Minister in the fundraising process has hindered and crippled the church's full potential. This is a key element that the Search Committee must address in the interview and search process for the next minister. A great opportunity to improve this function.
- 47 pressure to live outside our financial means; pressure to use endowment funds other than how they were intended to be used.
- 48 non predictable financial support
- 49 Old guard worried about silver.
- 50 Attendance (weekly).
- 51 It concerns me that there are not enough parishioners who consistently pledge and/or who volunteer to greet, lead social hour, join committees.
- 52 The possibility that our membership will decrease. We have a tough time meeting our financial goals as it is.
- 53 While this is a great community, we lose a lot of wonderful people too. Need to figure out how to keep people connected.
- 54 I would like to see the Sunday services hold together better thematically. I'd also like to see more diversity in the musical selections weekly. I think it could help to have the Music Committee and the Committee that plans the services work more closely together.
- 55 Not sure.
- 56 Membership -- recruitment of new members
- 57 We try to do too much and there are too many fits and starts. Also, we need to get rid of our pews and reimagine our physical space. Boldness!!!
- 58 Lack of enthusiasm on committees. Scenario 1: the chair has to pull teeth to get people to help out. It makes it hard to accept being a chair if you know you will be left doing most of the work. Scenario 2: a domineering chair who doesn't try to get others involved. That furthers the problem of people not wanting to step up and do their part. Chairs should go through leadership training. It would also help if there were some communications protocols--who needs to know what when? Who makes decisions? It feels like we reinvent the wheel more than we should.
- 59 Burn-out of church leaders, who are volunteering their time.

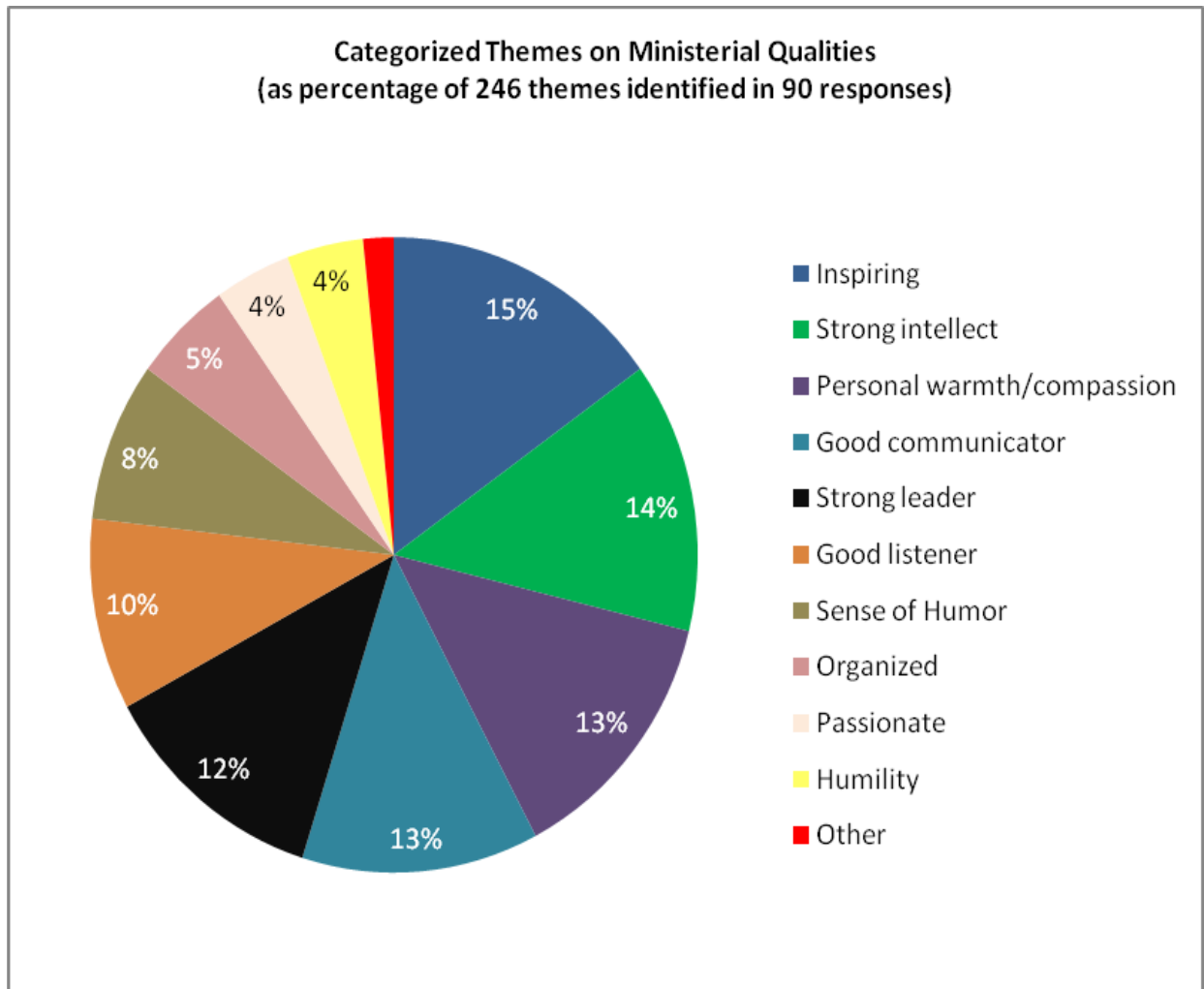
First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 60 Offering diverse music to meet needs of diverse interests in worship.
- 61 outspending our income and eating our endowment
- 62 I believe we are under-pledged, so getting folks to value the church with their pocketbooks as well as their time and presence is a challenge for a new minister. S/he should be a dynamic presence who makes folks want to give.
- 63 Lack of varied music
- 64 Apathy and a lack of clear direction. Too few people doing most of the work to keep things running.
- 65 Need to grow and sustain membership.
- 66 Overall I feel really happy with my participation at First Parish and although I'm sure there are problems, I felt really energized by the first day of services in Sept. Lots of happy faces, tons of kids, so no real concerns for me right now.
- 67 Retention of members once their children grow up; there seems to be a high attrition rate.
- 68 the loss of cohesion since Parisa left. To be expected, but I hope it returns.
- 69 some disorganization; a sometimes gossipy environment
- 70 The presence of alcohol at most church social events.
- 71 Adequacy of our physical spaces.
Adequate funding of our staff, physical spaces and social justice objectives.
- 72 I think we are still struggling with the ramifications of decisions from recent years - the fate of the silver, our openness to radical change, our reactions to Parisa's departure - and I think it is not clear that we agree on the best path forward.
- 73 The responsibility to the building. I'd love to sell it and just be a congregation, and do something else with the money. However, we do have a responsibility to the community of Milton. The visibility of faith in the form of buildings may be important. I'm not sure what I think about that at the moment.
- 74 Giving too "top heavy". Very high annual expenses between building and payroll.
- 75 Lay leaders burning out because so much is asked of them.
- 76 Budget -- raising the funds
Administration seems rather haphazard.
- 77 Declining membership
- 78 Looking forward to a new minister who will inspire me as Parisa did.
- 79 Really, we're doing pretty great. The main concern is that we forget how great we're doing and take the challenges we do have as an excuse not to be bold. To be pinched rather than expansive.
- 80 Declining attendance/membership. The perennial budget shortfall. Making sure our staff is supported and appreciated.
- 81 Worship became a bit disjointed last year, probably the natural effect of a ministerial transition. However, I think that Sunday worship is very important - and needs to be very strong, very well-planned. It is how most people first find us, and it is an important weekly touchstone for most of us - so the quality of the worship experience is important and has really degraded over the past year. I do believe that one of the most important things a minister will do is ensure this cohesiveness, in partnership with the worship committee.
- 82 Lack of involvement of youth in church activities.
- 83 - Small number of young adults and young families
-Lack of diversity
- 84 We seem to lose as many members each year as we gain. It concerns me that we need a stronger financial base to make building improvements.
- 85 The Sunday worship is not spiritually nourishing....at least not consistently.
- 86 Our inability to financially cover a higher percentage of our yearly operating budget from our annual budget drive. Also our chronic need for more space within the campus.
- 87 The above

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 88 Financial support from the congregation as a whole is not as strong as it should be. As a congregation, we tend to be overly reliant on our endowment. At the same time the Trustees of the Parish Funds are somewhat dogmatically tied to severely limiting the use of the funds. While the Trustees have historical reasons for their position, we need to discuss the use of the endowment with more openmindedness and flexibility without falling into settled, entrenched positions.
- 89 It often feels like church is "competing" with the very busy lives of congregants- how might we better meet the needs of members to reduce the "busy-ness" and increase the meaningfulness?
- 90 How we use our endowment, and how the money is managed. I feel there has been a lack of transparency and not a clear sense that the congregation has stewardship over the funds. As always, I would love to have a more diverse membership, and wonder why we fail to keep many of those who do attend church. Why to they fall away?
The problem of class in our church is another issue. I would love to explore this more openly as a congregation. I think some people may not feel comfortable coming to church because there is an assumption about who we are.
- 91 getting more members to pledge

Question 44 – Hoped-for Profile for New Minister as Reported by Respondents



What qualities (professional skills: expertise and personal) should our next minister possess? What is your profile for our Hoped-for minister?

- 1 Loving, accessible, guiding light
- 2 Excellent thinker, orator and spiritual leader
- 3 -Caring
-Considerate
-Warm and has their arms wide open to our entire congregation
-Being open to all people and ideas
- 4 The ability to interact positively with the parishioners
- 5 Commitment to being a UU minister. Strong, spiritual, charismatic leader.
- 6 a minister that is not distracted by too many goals and aspirations, who can help grow stronger in community with one another and gain the energy we need to do more in our community
- 7 Parissa

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 8 This person should be able to communicate religion and spirituality without relying on one religious background. (For instance, I would like to hear views/references from Christian, Islamic, Jewish, whatever!)
- 9 I want someone who makes me question and think. I want someone who challenges societal norms. Someone who teaches me how to be a better person. Someone who gives really good and inspirational sermons. Someone who gets different people of the church community involved in the services.
- 10 I checked that I would like to see a minister who is an inspirational leader. Someone who through their sermons and their advocacy for social action will inspire me and others to dig deeper into what is most important in their lives; who will inspire people to do things that they might not otherwise do; who has a realistic vision of what is possible First Parish, based on their experience and on their skills in convincing people to follow them.
- 11 Young cool person, very open minded, kind.
- 12 Person with lots of life experience- hopefully has already raised children and is prepared to devote themselves to the church. Values our community as is but also interested in expanding membership, Scholarly, caring. A clone of Erik Resly although older would be perfect
- 13 Humility is important - showing their own humanity and struggles versus preaching at us from a holier place.
- 14 Funny, intelligent, driven
- 15 Good managerial, organizational skills. Energy to move the congregation to thinking toward growth and social activism
- 16 intellectually challenging, caring, sense of humor, compassionate
- 17 A strong leader with a vision for the future; strong intellectually; professional (very conscientious about their job); a good manager of the church and its staff; extremely collaborative with and encouraging of lay leaders; a caring and giving person that embodies the best of who we are and who can connect with members of the parish on a personal level; and, is able to lead a strong Sunday service and deliver thought provoking and emotionally stimulating sermons on a variety of issues important to the Parish.
- 18 Hmmm. Would love to have someone who knows themselves well, and who knows how to lead. Someone who will inspire us on Sundays, and then watch us go out and be bold. I would love to have someone who is good at group process and helping the congregation get out of it's own way so to speak---
- 19 They should not be afraid to "steer" the congregation in spiritual matters and they should be much more attuned to the needs and troubles of individual members.
- 20 I am looking for a minister who focuses on the spiritual life of the community, not on administration of the church, or on furthering an ultra-liberal political agenda. Management and administrative control should reside in committees; allowing a minister to drive them means that they do not necessarily represent the views of members, and diverts his or her attention from spiritual and pastoral efforts. Politics and social action should be pursued by members individually and at the committee level.
I would hope that our next minister resembles the congregation but has had enough life experience to empathize with people of different backgrounds. I don't think we need to actively seek a mixed race gender queer physically challenged minister to demonstrate our open-mindedness as a congregation. It's helpful to have someone who appreciates common struggles, rather than a person who pursues identity politics.
- 21 Able to put together and deliver a good service
to be compassionate not demanding
provide leadership, the ability to prioritize and delegate
- 22 Isaiah 58:9-12
- 23 A keen intellect that will stimulate parishioners' thinking and challenged pre-conceived notions. First Parish's next minister should also possess deep spiritual and humanistic beliefs.
- 24 I don't care about age, gender, whether atheist or buddhist, etc. I want someone who is articulate, has intellectual curiosity, a good sense of humor, and empathy for parishioners.
- 25 Be open minded. Consider other points of view.
- 26 excellent interpersonal skills, ability to exercise their abilities and integrate the strengths of others.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 27 hope, joy, intellect, people skills, understanding, inclusiveness
- 28 Intelligent, with a good sense of humour, easy to talk with and a good listener. I'd feel more comfortable with a minister who has led other congregations, but that's not a requirement for me.
- 29 The new minister should be someone who is prepared to lead the congregation both in worship, but also in social action and outreach. We need someone who will (if necessary) drag the congregation out of it's apathy and get it involved.
- 30 Personal warmth. Engaging. Energetic. Fun-loving. Articulate. Excellent communicator and connector. Imaginative. Organized. Lives and works "sustainably." Fiscally savvy.
- 31 Someone who inspires people to pursue their individual reason for being part of the church (whether that is social, intellectual, spiritual)
- 32 Good speaker
Energetic but organized
Relates well to families, especially teens
- 33 I don't care if they are man or woman hypothetically. I tend to favor women and have so far only attended female led churches. When I have had male ministers, I have felt talked down to and talked AT. With women, I feel led, empowered, and listened to. I like voices that uplift. I like it when ministers share from their experiences as well as from history. The most memorable service Parisa led she spoke of self forgiveness about a "dinner gone wrong" at home. Feeling /sharing the burdens of every day life resonates more with me more than reading / TELLING about some dead prophet. Who cares (about that)
- 34 A minister with that certain, compelling, something. That thing where you are moved, or at least calm, in the presence of him or her. Grounded, inspiring, smart, empathic, with well written or at least well-thought-out, articulate sermons. A sense of calling. Creativity. HUMILITY. Curiosity. Excellent listener. Warmth. Patient. Stable. Reliable. Interested in us. Willing to challenge us. Not a "performer." An activist. Open hearted. Sense of humor. Able to run a meeting and keep things on point and respectful. Able to have difficult conversations. Perfect? :) I suppose they need also need to (hopefully) gracefully manage/oversee the behind the scenes of the church, the admin, etc, and make sure our best self is presented within and outside the church. These aspects are also essential, though they are secondary to me.
- 35 passionate, active
- 36 Knowledge and understanding of different faiths.
- 37 Welcoming. Intellectually challenging.
- 38 An intellectually stimulating individual who has compassion for others.
- 39 Good leader
Good listener
Good speaker
Open minded
Good head for business
Good sense of humor
Consensus builder
Appreciates and interacts well with staff and lay leadership
- 40 I hope for an inspiring, spiritually deep person.
- 41 Approachable community builder who inspires and knows their limits
- 42 Someone with a sense of humor and ability to communicate with all kinds of people. Down to earth and willing to show his/her vulnerability. Inspirational and courageous! A listener and a storyteller.
- 43 n/a
- 44 Consistency, authenticity, grounded, creative, ability to motivate staff, fund raise
- 45 A commitment to fully participating in our church and community. I want someone who is one of us, not separate or above. I want someone kind, loving, compassionate, inspiring, and HUMAN.
- 46 An intellectual who can deliver a thought-provoking sermon; a people-person with a sense of humor; a compassionate, caring counselor; an individual with energy, organizational, and management skills. Tall order.
- 47 Someone intelligent with good social skills and good speaking skills.
- 48 Powerful worship, skilled preaching is most important to me.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 49 He should be over 40 years old. A great speaking voice. His sermons should speak to everyone in the congregation with a learned and inquisitive mind, that speaks to his capacity as a minister, and to his questions of life as a blue collar working man. And personally I would be very happy to hear a service by a Secular Humanist or a non-theist once in a while.
- 50 I am sure most people have contributed to the character, academic and spiritual skills we want in a minister. So, again, I would like to address the need for a minister who has fundraising skills (or comfortable to directly ask for gifts to members of capacity). We must get a minister who embraces the annual fundraising needs of the church and who sees himself as part of the leadership who engages in making direct asks for contributions from members with capacity.
- 51 I'd like to see a Minister who offers intellectual, challenging leadership - someone who continues to foster a sense of community but who is willing to shake things up if necessary.
- 52 sense of humor, someone who loves people, who can both inspire and say difficult things, someone who can manage and engage members in defining and meeting congregational goals.
- 53 I think the minister is a very influential component in making people want to be active in church programming. He or she should inspire, motivate, encourage, and engage the congregation. And for me, I think the minister would probably be the biggest factor in making me want to come to service on Sundays. If the "sermons" or talks are interesting, thought-provoking, relevant, and inspiring, I would look forward to coming.
- 54 Ability to inspire lay leadership and cooperative action. A spiritual leader who encourages the congregation to ethical action. A strong sense pastoral role to all. A great sense of humor. Intelligent and stimulating service preparation that is inclusive of lay participation. Visionary and have clear sense of the challenges the modern church faces. Creative ways to deal with these challenges.
- 55 Humor empathy and wisdom.
- 56 Intelligent with a sense of humor. Someone with vision - not overbearing, but focused on moving congregation out of tired routines.
- 57 I'd love to have someone who has deep, profound understanding and valuing of non-Christian traditions, who can work with the CUUPS group to help broaden its involvement in First Parish, and integrate us more into the greater community. Right now it feels stovepiped to me, and that makes me really uncomfortable.
- 58 Parisa is the only minister I have ever had any experience with, so my perspective is skewed. From her I most valued the quality of her sermons, and her intellectual prowess. In a new minister, I would like to see someone with those qualities, and perhaps someone a little more extroverted.
- 59 I want a real leader who has compassion and humility along with courage to be prophetic.
- 60 Inspiring every Sunday. Giving us a reason to want to come and act on our values. To not be afraid to get in there and deal with challenges among lay leaders, parishioners, staff, etc. Guiding the church as an organization that needs sound management.
- 61 I probably shouldn't say it but to have someone with the wisdom and compassion that Parisa brought would be a dream. She was quietly creative, always challenging us to look at the ways we worshiped and interacted. She was deeply concerned and deeply caring of every single person in the church. I miss that.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 62 Good listener, optimism, street smart intellectual, not afraid to challenge the status quo, compassionate, humble.
- 63 good Sermons !! Laurie Bilyeu was GREAT...literally made me weep..not in guilt but in knowing I could do better.
- 64 organized, passionate - personally and about their beliefs, flexible, enthusiastic, able to see the humor in life without being flippant
- (these are in no particular order)
- 65 Energetic compassionate easy listener and great collaborater
- 66 warmth, intellect, empathy, vision; a good leader to go on a spiritual journey with.
- 67 Sense of humor; strong administrative skills (staff supervision and management); compassion; intellect; vision; energy.
- 68 I hope our new minister is an excellent communicator, organized, and with a friendly, approachable demeanor. A sense of humor is nice.
- 69 Warmth, vibrancy, humor, depth, ability to connect both individually and with the congregation as a whole.
- 70 I think the last few questions (on the previous page)
- outlined that.
- 71 organization; intelligence; a good balance between earnestness and humor; commitment to social justice; excellent communication (both writing and speaking) skills;
- 72 Kind, compassionate individual who can inspire through authentic presence.
- 73 Inspirational.
- Forward-thinking.
- 74 I hope for someone who can lead a strong and compelling Sunday worship service, both for our current membership and to draw new members from the community. I imagine someone who is comfortable working with inter generational groups who can bring us together in and out of worship. I hope for a minister who creates relationships with members and who has those relationships to draw on in times of crisis. I hope for someone who will work well with our church staff and support them - Miriam and Kiki have a very good sense of our needs and I hope we find someone who they can both enthusiastically support. I hope we find someone who can be available for events and community service and outreach outside of Sunday worship - I think being a part of the larger community is important.
- 75 Someone smart and caring, who's a good learner and listener. Someone with a great pastoral presence who loves us and yet has good boundaries. Someone who is collaborative rather than prescriptive. I miss that very much. Someone who will ask for help and not let us use them up or be tempted to do so themselves.
- 76 Strong intellect, good sense of humor, inspiring- basically Parisa part II....
- 77 Warm, caring, excellent speaker, interesting, engaging, not afraid to speak what they see as the truth, presents thoughtful and thought-provoking sermons, welcoming, good listener, able to work well with others, strong leader with a clarity of vision but open to hearing other people's opinions and ideas, likes people of all ages, respectful,
- 78 Articulate, intelligent, healthy dose of skepticism, ability to put together a good service (inc. readings, music, sermon) with a sense of the ebb and flow of the service.
- 79 A super hero but with kids
- 80 Forward thinking, strategies on how our church can work on that "Bold Action" together. I loved the "Eric's", who brought us fresh ideas, gave excellent sermons and also were able to listen well on a one to one basis.
- 81 I would want someone who is a good listener, who can tell a good story of how our church and UU'ism can operate in the world, and who is laser-focused on bringing as many people into our congregation as possible and inspiring them to greater feats of leadership and action.
- 82 I would like to see someone who is wise, thoughtful, and compassionate. Someone willing to lead and guide us assertively.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 83 the question about partisan beliefs, (#36) is relevant here - in my view a really strong minister would be able to preach and stimulate thinking about very controversial, and partisan topics, in a way that is principled, takes a stand, but isn't specifically "partisan" ie., - political parties. I think a good minister would be able to influence critical thinking, without specifically telling people how to vote- in some ways that is the mark to me of a very talented minister, and the core of what I think a minister should do - challenge us spiritually, morally and intellectually - to deeper understanding, compassion and action.
- 84 Humorous, friendly, open-minded.
- 85 The ability to be human and funny, humble but wise. Like Parisa and like Eric.
- 86 Energetic leader, socially aware and able to relate and reflect upon what is challenging to their congregants in a way that challenges them to look forward to Monday, to life and to seek ways to bring the best out of themselves for the greater good.
- 87 I feel that our community maintains a reasonably strong sense of fellowship, and I believe that we benefitted enormously from the vision of our previous settled minister. I would hope for a minister who will bring a sense of vision about whom we can become as a community and who will push us outside our comfort zone while unearthing/recognizing our strengths.

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 88 Personal warmth
- 89 Any number of profiles would make me happy. Mainly, I want a minister with a balance of skills, a commitment to the health and well-being of the congregation, and the confidence to promote lay leadership across both spiritual and administrative areas of church life.
- 90 I would look for someone who is dynamic, inspiring, and is not afraid to push us outside of our comfort zone. I would like someone who can celebrate the past but not be beholden to it. With support of lay leadership, the minister needs to be able to question how/why things are done a certain way.
Having a sense of humor and personal warmth, with the ability to be self-deprecating at times, is key.

Question 45 – Other thoughts About the Minister Reported by Respondents

Are there any special issues that you would like our Ministerial Search Committee to consider and on which you would like to express your views?

- 1 How can we KEEP members? I feel we have too much turnover. Is UU-ism REALLY sustainable?
- 2 For me, church is a place to be challenged intellectually, spiritually and, yes, theologically. Social action is not important to me in terms of what I think a church community should be doing. Stimulating members to be thoughtful voters and active participants in government and the larger community is, however, very important
- 3 No.
- 4 Look for a serious long term commitment. Good work on the survey. Let it guide you, but keep an eye on the main goal, which is to find the best overall spiritual leader for our church. Thank you.
- 5 None
- 6 Please find someone who values the congregation as it is, encourages us to be our best selves, and draws people to the church because he/she is inspirational in his/her views, life choices, and sermons
- 7 No

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 8 UU parishes vary wildly in their religious orientation. I would strongly favor a minister, like Parisa, who has a strong Judeo-Christian focus.
I believe it is important to honor and recognize other faith traditions, but one of the problems the UU church often experiences is that it tries to be "all things to all people."
The UU church is the face of liberal Christianity, and it is important to me that the new minister is someone that will help continue that tradition at First Parish.
- 9 Hmm. Please pick someone who understand the importance of RE. I am not asking for someone who will spend all their time on this, but someone who has a bit of a more sacred view of our kids and their role in the world.
Please also pick someone who knows their limits, and will help us understand how we are continually fearful about pushing ourselves beyond our comfort zones-- in a way that inspires change and motivation.
But also know that we are learning that a minister is not the be all end all, and we need to minister more to ourselves!!! And each other!!!!
Thanks to you all for this sacred leadership you are providing!!!
- 10 See above. I am comfortable with anyone being our minister, however, what I want is a spiritual leader, not an advocate for their political ideas or sexual orientation or class, etc. Their religious identity and values should come from religion not from personal identity politics. For example, one can talk about accepting disabled people by discussing Jesus and the lepers and then it has a religious foundation, focuses on the worth of that person, and the shortcomings of the rest of us who may not accept the leper; but if one talks about the victimhood of people with disabilities that is a very different message.
- 11 We really love Hank. We understand that an interim minister cannot become a settled minister, but we think he strikes a good balance between the liberal and conservative factions within the congregation and serves as a facilitator and resource, rather than the CEO of the parish. His use of humor in services is welcome, as are his deep humanity, humility, and intellectual but accessible sermons.
- 12 No
- 13 no
- 14 think about the passion and leadership values the new minister will bring
- 15 No
- 16 We are in the thick of colleges and divinity schools and churches here in the Northeast, and we have a beautiful church and congregation. I hope you can find a very strong minister that will challenge and inspire us! Please, please, don't settle for someone who doesn't have the character and integrity that we deserve and need. Thank you!!
- 17 Sometimes it would be good to have a second service... Life is busy... And I feel it there was a second weekend serving...I would be able to attend more.
- 18 We need a minister that challenges us. Inertia is a strong force and needs to be met head on.
- 19 We are very very grateful for the hard work of the Search Committee !
- 20 I would like the Search Committee to keep in mind that not everyone who attends FP in Milton resides in Milton and we should always try to embrace the community at large.
- 21 a minister of color or a woman would be really exciting
- 22 I sometimes feel the gender/sexual orientation issues dominate discussions. I'd like to see the church focus on other issues with equal enthusiasm like racial equity, refugee resettlement, the isolation and overwhelm of daily life, war, etc.
- 23 I have faith in the Search Committee's ability to gather information from members and make a good decision.
- 24 I came to FP and stayed largely because of the sermons. I know that they are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what a minister does, but sermons are a focal point for many, and the first thing that most visitors to FP will encounter. The sermons need depth, need to raise the congregation's awareness (spiritual or otherwise) and keep us thinking.
I have not been at FP often in the last year due to the lack of these qualities in the sermons. I hope to see them again in the future.
- 25 It is worth it to pay well for high quality leadership.
- 26 I only wish to thank you for all of the work you are doing and will do to select the next Minister!

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

- 27 thank you for your commitment!
- 28 It would be wonderful if the new minister were actively welcoming to agnostics and atheists, as well as to people of various faiths.
- 29 I have total faith in our search committee.
- 30 It's not wrong to look for someone like our former minister. It's worth thinking about why we were so comfortable with her. Let's not go entirely in the other direction and select someone who is constantly trying to shake us out of our "comfort zones."
- 31 I personally need a minister who understands the devastation wrought by the financial crisis, and what it did to my hopes and dreams. I cannot possibly alone in this concern. I need to see us find someone who has the depth of heart to help members who were severely impacted by that crisis, and other personal crises, rebuild their lives and regain stability. I don't mean financial help -- I mean moral support and nonjudgmental attitudes towards those of us who fell out of the comfortable middle class.
This is why I am very leery of a minister from a privileged background or conservative political bent. I haven't found much empathy in those who are such, simply because they tend to exhibit an utter lack of imagination for just how BLOODY AWFUL these last several years have been for a hell of a lot of people. I lost all of my savings and my home and my health, and I cannot, will not tolerate anyone saying I didn't try hard enough to keep those things. It is so ungodly hard to impose a diet of beans and rice on a family that grew up on steak, seafood, poultry, and plenty of it, just because the best job you can find only pays \$15/hour, when you need two fulltime incomes to have any dignity, and finding that second fulltime income is vanishingly difficult.
- 32 I have great faith in our committee. I know that they can only choose from the pool of candidates that's presented to them. I do not expect them to hand-craft a new minister. I have complete faith that, from the pool that we have to choose from, we will get the best of the best!
- 33 I hope our new minister is happy. I want someone to come and fall in love with us. I want us to have a minister who can be our cheerleader, pushing us, cheerfully, into a new future. Hank is a wonderful preacher but I always have the sense that when he is gone, we will be forgotten. It is undoubtedly supposed to be that way, but I miss having a leader who genuinely cares about us.
- 34 I have often thought of leaving when things don't go well....but I love the people here and realize that it's a spiritual journey in itself to stay and work things out....that's a critical part of being part of any family.
- 35 Balancing the budget w/o dependance on the endowment. Push leaving bequests to the church.
- 36 I would like to know what s/he feels his/her biggest impact has been in a previous position and how that changed the way s/he does things now.
- 37 Try to find someone who doesn't view this role as a stepping stone to another role elsewhere. Look for someone with more experience who would be happy and appreciative to call this congregation their home.
- 38 The church is poised to grow and become more vibrant; it will take great skill and energy; perhaps a minister who is seasoned - but not ready to retire- would have the right amount of experience and energy.
- 39 I thought question #37 was a little strange. None of those traits in a person make me enthusiastic or uncomfortable by themselves -- they are all part of a bigger picture and can't be considered in isolation. I wasn't sure how to answer.
- 40 I would like the committee to focus on their own thoughts, talk with each other A LOT and find your common ground. You all know this church, so go with confidence that you can make a good decision. Good Luck, we are counting on you!
- 41 If you read the above, I think you will see that I am concerned that we will ask for what we had before, when that's not really who we are.
We are not going to close the doors once a month or even once a year and worship at the outdoor church. We are a church that feeds people who already help people either through professions or volunteer work. People who make a great deal of difference in the world. I think a minister who is different from us and who will help us forge connections with our neighboring UU churches in Mattapan, Canton, Quincy, Brookline, Boston, or with other houses of worship in Milton would bring transformation in our understanding of the struggles and viewpoints of others and help us expand our horizons and community in ways we have yet to

First Parish Milton UU Congregational Survey - September 2015

experience. Churches are shrinking because many religious values, especially UU, have made it into the mainstream. There is a new opportunity for the churches that remain to grow what they give in new ways, but we're having trouble doing that alone. We always make it more complicated and bigger than we feel ready to handle. Maybe meeting a neighbor would be a good step.

Also, our youth are really the best of us. I would love to see us make a commitment join the youth in their social action events at least twice a year. We don't value them enough. Also, we have a great youth program. It would be amazing to offer that to every youth in Milton as an alternative to other activities. I would include OWL and Coming of Age. Who doesn't benefit from articulating their values and what they believe?

Thanks for all your work! I am sorry I had trouble answering. I really did the best I could and know you did too.

- 42 I fully and wholeheartedly trust and support the MSC
- 43 I am not a fan of communion. yet I understand that some people appreciate it as a Christian practice. If it must be continued, I would like a new minister to balance it out with equally spiritual traditions from other religions. Ideally, communion would not be as often as once a month.
- 44 I trust you all without hesitation or reservation. Thanks for all you do!
- 45 Not really. I have a lot of confidence in our search committee's ability to find and offer us someone who will be an excellent fit.
- 46 Nothing beyond what I've already said.
- 47 No.
- 48 Vibrant services are the entry point for many people. For those of us whose entry point was and is RE, vibrant services are crucial to keeping us coming back. As I mentioned before, good sermons and an interesting variety of service formats, are key to keeping people coming through the door.