

SURVEY SUMMARY (THE DIRECTOR'S CUT)

UUFGL participated in an in-depth Congregational Survey as part of our search for a settled minister. The purpose of the survey was to help define — both for ourselves and prospective candidates — who we are philosophically and demographically, what our collective values are about worship and ministry, and what we are looking for in a settled minister. All individual answers will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of the UUFGL Ministerial Search Committee. The summarized, anonymous results of the survey responses below are being shared here for educational purposes, transparency...and sheer interest! A “summary of the summary” incorporating a more generalized overview and fewer actual statistics is being made available as well; Contact the UUFGL office, check the www.uufg.org website, or email search2018@uufg.org for a copy.

SURVEY PARAMETERS

The Survey contained 9 sections:

1. [Activities & Participation](#)
2. [Leadership & Goals](#)
3. [Your Beliefs & Attitudes](#)
4. [Views on Worship Services](#)
5. [Views on Professional Ministry](#)
6. [Policies & Traditions](#)
7. [About You](#)
8. [About Your Family & Household Part 1](#) (for all respondents' households)
9. [About Your Family & Household Part 2](#) (for respondents with children living at home).

There were 109 total survey respondents, of which most were Members (~92%). We calculated that ~65% of our Members responded to the survey*. The UUFGL survey response rate is slightly above the approximate average response rate of 60% across the UUA, according to our Transition Coach, Reverend Marni Harmony.

Nearly 50,000 data points were collected. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole point. We hope you are able to use this information to improve your understanding of, deepen your compassion for, and surprise you with new avenues of thought about this, our beloved community.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

81% of respondents reported attending services regularly (most 3 or more times per month). 14% of respondents rarely or never attend services. The top 3 contributing factors that were Very or Extremely Important to a respondents' decision to BEGIN participating at UUFGL were “Celebrating Common Values” (86%), “Intellectual Stimulation” (81%), and “Community” (80%). The lowest ranked in importance was “Men’s Groups,” which 95% of respondents ranked as only Somewhat or Hardly/Not at All Important. The top 3 reasons to CONTINUE participating at UUFGL — “Celebrating Common Values” (88%), “Community” (84%), and “UU Beliefs/Covenants” (81%) — seem to indicate that our connections to each other and to UU values increase in importance given time and continued participation.

The most popular forms of communication/information-sharing are “Emails from the President/Minister/Church Admin” (67%), “Verbal Announcements During service” (62%), and a two-way tie for 3rd between “Chalice Connections Weekly Email” and “Email listservs (sent by Members)” (61%). The “Gazette (printed insert in the Order of Service)” (59%) and “Gazette

(emailed PDF)” (53%) were also widely used. “Info sign-up tables” (44%) and “Word of Mouth/Friends” (42%) were also popular. All other forms of communication were used by only a small percentage of respondents.

There was an approximately even distribution among respondents reporting either an increase, decrease, or stable level of attendance since beginning participation at UUFG, slightly favoring Increased Recently (36%). Most cited unique reasons, though a personal commitment to attend, ministerial influence, and calls to specific service work were the most commonly cited strongest influences. “Available Time” (24%) was the most commonly cited generic influence.

The top 3 inspirations to invite people to attend services at UUFG were “Meaningful Sermon” (31%), “Music (Listening or Participating)” (26%) and “Meaningful Worship” (24%). In terms of types and degree of participation, an average of 55% of respondents have never participated in any activities. “Young Adult Group” (95%), “Chalice Table” (92%), and “Web/Technical Support (91%, which may reflect the percentage of those lacking the specialized skill or equipment needed to participate) were the activities claiming the lowest levels of participation. “Youth Group” (90%) also came in with high levels of non-participation, though this may in part be due to our class sizes and numbers being small, providing fewer volunteer opportunities. An average of 5% of respondents participated weekly in some kind of activity. “Other” forms of participation reported included a variety of activities like Book Club, Public Protests, Pastoral Care, and others. About 40% spent fewer than 2 hours per week participating (including service and coffee hour), while 11% spent 15 or more hours per week engaged in UUFG-related activities.

SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP AND GOALS

Confidence in lay leadership is high in terms of “Encouraging/Supporting Development of New Programs” (70%). There was a fairly even split between respondents who indicated either Affirmation (49%) or Indecision/Uncertainty (40%) of lay leadership’s “Responsiveness to All Segments of the Congregation.” A similar split in responses occurred around whether lay leadership is “Too Concerned with Implementing Wishes of One Particular Person or Group” (50% felt it was not too concerned with special interest, 40% were unsure/undecided).

There is a mostly stable but slightly downward trend in participation when comparing the previous 5 years of leadership role participation with the leadership roles respondents were willing to take in the next 1-3 years: “Committee/Team Leader” role representation dropped from 27% past participation versus 22% future willingness, and “Recurrent Activity Participant” dropped from 64% past participation to 61% future willingness. All other levels of participation were within a few percentage points of being generally stable, including No Participation At All (23% past participation and and future willingness).

The top 5-year goal most wanted to see achieved was “Growth in Membership” (23%), followed closely by “A strong reputation in the Gainesville Community” (20%). The lowest-ranked main goal was “Improvement in our Campus/Grounds” (3%). When asked specifically about the issue, an overwhelming 87% were in favor of growing our membership. Not one respondent favored a same-sized or smaller congregation. While most (42%) felt neutral about the state of our campus/grounds, there was an even split among the remaining respondents, with 29% feeling Favorable and 28% feeling Unfavorable about the current state.

10% of respondents attended any cluster, district, or denominational meetings in the last year.

SUMMARY OF YOUR BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

The general map of our congregations’ beliefs is, unsurprisingly, widely varied. Some of the standout statistics show strong agnostic, atheist, and humanist beliefs (both religious and secular), with a



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strong contingent of theists providing rich counterpoint. For example, while a total of 71% of respondents Somewhat or Strongly Disagreed that “The teachings of Jesus of Nazareth is central to their understanding of God, the Universe, and the Human Condition,” 18% Somewhat or Strongly Agreed with this same idea. Similarly, 70% of respondents Somewhat or Strongly Disagreed that “A personal relationship with God was a vital part of their spiritual life,” whereas 21% Somewhat or Strongly Agreed with this same idea. 65% of respondents Somewhat or Strongly Agreed that “‘Goodness’ and ‘meaning’ are human constructs created as a result of the human encounter with each other and the world,” while less than 8% Somewhat or Strongly Disagreed with this same idea. In general, there appears to be about a 2/3 to 1/3 relationship between humanists and theists.

The vast majority of respondents — by a factor of 10 — held that our UUG applied mission was best defined as “Benevolence and Justice: We have a special commitment to foster a just and humane world, continually striving to create a capacity for caring, compassion, and empathy to all people.” (72%). The next highest response was “Mystery and Awe” (7%).

Survey respondents cited “Search for Connection” and “Search for Community” (tied at 29%) as the top concerns motivating their spiritual life and faith, followed closely by “Framework of morality and hope” (26%).

The top three theological profiles most identified with (respondents could pick more than one) were “Agnostic” (34%), “Secular Humanist” (32%), and “Religious Humanist” (28%). 17% cited they were “Uncertain” or “Other” (for example “Mystic”).

The top three faith traditions cited as being important to current religious development (respondents could pick more than one) were: Unitarian Universalism (87%), Buddhism (48%), and Christianity (39%).

Adherence to different types of spiritual practices were fairly evenly divided in importance, with the exceptions of “Communion with Nature” (85% Important, engaged in Daily or Weekly by 76% of respondents), “Journalling” (79% Not Important), and “Prayer (as you define it)” (63% Not Important). While many did not report engaging in religious practices regularly, the top 3 practices engaged in Daily or Weekly were “Yoga/Movement-based practice” (42%), “Meditation” (40%), and “Music/Sound-based practice” (39%).

The most commonly held belief about immortality is that “A person’s memory lives on in the minds of their loved ones” (49%), while there is about an even distribution between those adhering to a belief in the persistence of a soul (in some way), and those stating that concern for immortality is a distraction (both at 19%).

SUMMARY OF VIEWS ON WORSHIP SERVICES

While all of the provided Reasons for Attending Worship at UUG held some degree of importance to most respondents, the top 3 most popular were “Celebration of Common Values” (81%), “Sense of Belonging” (78%), and “Intellectual Stimulation” and “Hearing, Playing, or Singing Music” both at about (72%). “Other” reasons stated included opportunities to serve and learn about fellow members.

85% of respondents reported wanting to hear a Minister preach at least “3 times per month” ranging up to “Every Sunday,” a clear majority. Most respondents preferred lay leaders speak least often at “6 or fewer times per year,” only slightly favoring Guest Ministers or Guest Speakers (“Once per month” (54%), as an alternative to the minister.

The top 5 Very or Extremely Important aspects of Sunday worship service were “Sermon” (97%), “Sharing Joys & Sorrows” (86%), “Multicultural Sensitivity” (86%), “Choir” (84%), and “Welcoming



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Guests” (82%). The 3 least important aspects according to respondents were “Prayer” (32%), “Affirmations or Blessings” (26%), and “Responsive (interactive) Readings” (22%).

The top 3 most important Sunday sermon topics were “Calls to Action to Live by Core Values” (87%), “Values and Perspectives on Social Issues” (86%), and “UU 7 Principles” (81%), followed closely by “Personal Growth” and “Coping with Life” (80%). “Other” topics suggested included “Developing empathy,” “Humor,” and “Conflict resolution.”

Nearly all Sunday service objectives were marked with high levels of importance to all respondents, framed at the top by “Building Community” (95%) and at the bottom by “Inspire Reverence and Awe” (63%). “Celebration” was one write-in objective of high importance.

SUMMARY OF VIEWS ON PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY

While half of the congregation felt neutral about the experience level preferred in a settled minister, there was a strong split between those favoring “6-10 years” (28%) and “2-5 years” (20%) prior ministerial experience.

The infamous ministerial priorities question (which caused quite a stir among respondents with its requirement to prioritize 7 different tasks in order from 1-7), had an understandably wide variety of answers. “Spiritual Leader” was marked by 56% of respondents as a top priority role (ranked 1st or 2nd) for the settled minister, whereas there was a tie for lowest priority role (ranked 6th or 7th) between “Administrator” (42%) and “Social Activist” (40%). This seeming disparity between the low priority for a minister to be a Social Activist compared with UUF’s strong identification as a social justice congregation leads this committee member to believe it may be more important that our settled minister facilitate and develop leadership for social activism among congregants, rather than necessarily fulfilling that activist role themselves. It is doubtful the data would have supported this subtle understanding if we had not required respondents to prioritize answers absolutely. Thank you to everyone who toughed it out!

Top 3 ministerial responsibilities that should not be delegated to staff/lay leadership were “Presenting stimulating and challenging Sunday services” (65%), “Fostering a sense of fellowship and community within the church” (51%), and “Providing visible leadership in the community beyond the church” (34%).

Top 5 ministerial functions marked Very or Extremely Important were “Preaching (93%), “Worship” (89%), “Community-building” (86%), “Staff Relations (85%), and “Scholarship/Intellect” and “Church Dynamics” (77%) tied for 5th place.

Regarding the degree of ministerial involvement in church administrative activities, the majority of respondents favored the view that, while the minister is welcome to participate (or not), it is the committees that perform the bulk of the day-to-day management and policy-making for the church.

The preferred style of ministry was “Pastor” (40%) followed by “Facilitator” (36%). The only style that did not receive any responses at all was “Steward.” The top 3 personality traits found most desirable were “Empathy” (49%), “Professional competency (ability to communicate, counsel, empower, etc)” (48%), and “Character (strong moral consistency, stability, reliability)” (37%). The least-selected trait was “Humility” (11%).

Regarding the minister’s personal background and identity, the vast majority of respondents reported feeling neutral or positive about calling a minister with any number of racial, gender, sexual, or ability orientations, signifying we would seem to be living our values of inclusiveness and welcome. The strongest responses (for or against) were for “Politically Conservative” (75% Unfavorable), “Person of Color” (73% Favorable), “Politically Liberal” (68% Favorable),



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“Gay/Lesbian” (58% Favorable). In terms of age, respondents rated “Younger than 40” (50% Favorable, 47% Neutral) collectively more desirable compared to “Older than 60” (18% Favorable, 62% Neutral).

SUMMARY OF POLICIES AND TRADITIONS

84% of respondents agreed with the UU tradition of “freedom of the pulpit,” though opinion was divided about whether this policy should extend to the expression of partisan political views: 27% felt it did not, 38% felt it did, and 35% were uncertain.

98% of respondents agreed with the UUA General Assembly equal opportunity policy (1989), which adopted “ministerial settlement procedures without discrimination because of race, color, disability, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin.” The general tone of the 2% “Other” responses expressed concern about the consequences or impact of different identities, and how that might affect UUFG.

SUMMARY OF ABOUT YOU**

In general, our congregation is an older one, with a longer history of connection to Unitarian Universalism and the family of UUFG: 56% of respondents were 65 or older (83% were 50 or over). 67% reported at least 11 years of history identifying as a UU, and 57% indicated 11 years or more of association with UUFG. 28% said they were associated for 21 or more years.

45% reported UUism in general was a particular source of strength or comfort, and 43% said UUFG in particular was a source of strength or comfort. In terms of prior religious affiliations, the top two were “Protestant” (46%) or “None” (27%). “Hindu” was the only faith tradition that did not collect any responses for prior religious affiliation.

91% of respondents were white. The majority of respondents reported a gender identity of “Female” or “Cis-female” (65%), while 29% were “Male.” 5% reported “Other.” 89% were comfortable expressing their gender identity anywhere (public or private), while 11% reported needing some degree of privacy. 77% of respondents reported being “Straight/Heterosexual,” with further respondents reporting a sexual orientation of “Gay/Lesbian” (9%), “Bisexual” (5%), or “Other” (7%, including responses like queer, uncertain, pansexual, and asexual). 82% were comfortable expressing their sexual orientation anywhere (public or private), while 18% reported needing some degree of privacy.

79% report being in “Good” or “Very Good” physical health, and 78% characterized their mental health as “Good” or “Very Good.” 21% identified as living with a disability. 39% felt the congregation supported them in a time of need. 10% felt not at all supported in a time of need.

An average of 6% of respondents felt that UUFG responded “Poorly” to a variety of disability concerns (highest, “Cognitive Issues” 11%). An average of 16% thought we did “Very Well” (highest, “Hearing Issues” 25%). Highest overall confidence was in UUFG response to “Hearing Issues” (59% “Well or “Very Well”) and “Mobility Issues” (54% “Well” or “Very Well”).

42% reported observing the different social groups living together harmoniously. 38% observed division that was not damaging. Others report feeling tension that no one is talking about (9%), or deep unresolved conflicts (8%).

In keeping with UUs being the [2nd-most college educated religious group in the US after Hindus](#), a whopping 93% of respondents had earned at least a Bachelor’s Degree. (74% had earned at least a Master’s Degree, and 38% had earned at least a PhD, MD, or similar). 42% are retired, and 26% worked full-time in the past year. 11% earned investment income in the past year.



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The top 3 most common relationship statuses were “Married” (44%), “Widowed” (15%), and “Single/Divorced” (12%). 19% reported having a partner who does not participate at UUGF.

SUMMARY OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD (Part 1)***

48% of respondents live within 15 minutes travel of UUGF, and a further 35% live within 15-30 minutes travel. The vast majority (83%) of respondents live alone or with at most one other person. Other questions reflect this trend: 66% of households contained 1 Member or Contributing Friend, 60% reported only 1 person in the household participated at UUGF.

Gross Income varied widely: 31% reported earning \$0-\$49,999 annually; 39% reported earning \$50,000 - \$99,999; 31% reported earning more than \$100,000 per year.

SUMMARY OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD (Part 2, Minor Children)†

The most common age group reported for minor children living in the household was “7th-9th Grade” (37%). “Working/Trade School,” “10th-12th,” and “K-3rd” all tied for second place with 28%. This trend reflected in the number of children attending RE per age group as well, with the most being in “7th-9th” (46%) and “K-3rd” (37%).

Children were most commonly reported as attending “Public School” (73%). 37% reported their children took online classes, and 18% had children in private school.

Cognitive, emotional, and developmental circumstances varied, but the top common responses were “Gifted (eligible or enrolled)” (64%), while “Neurotypical,” “IEP (Individualized Education Program) in place,” “ADHD,” and “Other” (including circumstances like anxiety, depression, dyslexia, etc) all tied for 2nd place with 37%.

** While our total membership number as of October 2018 was 168 people, we calculated that 15 of those would not take the survey for various reasons, including those no longer living in Florida, or those with prohibitive cognitive deficits (severe dementia, etc) that would have prevented any level of participation in the survey. All possible efforts were made by the Committee to remove any other barriers to participation, including accommodating access to transportation, electronic devices, physical disability, and emotional and philosophical concerns. With this in mind, our total membership number for the purposes of the survey totals is 153, of which 100 participated (~65%). The other 9 respondents were either Contributing Friends or Active Participants.*

*** Not all survey respondents answered all questions in this section. The percentages on some questions are based on a smaller data pool (95-100 respondents) compared to the total number of respondents (109)*

**** Only one survey respondent per household answered this section in order to prevent skewed statistics. Though we hoped to have full information from everyone, some of these questions have fewer than 109 respondents due to clerical errors and conscious abstentions on paper surveys. In an effort to glean as much information as possible, the Committee collated all the available survey data, regardless of completeness, though we recognize this skews the import of the percentages slightly.*

† Only one survey respondent per household with minor children living at home answered this section in order to prevent skewed statistics. Only about 9% of survey respondents filled out this section, meaning this information may not be fully representative of our parent/child population and their collective experience at UUGF (since the data pool is so small). All statistics reflect the percentages of total responses collected in this section.



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