

MST SURVEY RESULTS

What was the survey for?

The Ministerial Search Team and prospective ministerial candidates use the survey results to better understand what congregations are looking for in their next settled minister.

When was the survey open?

Unity's 2021 Ministerial Search Survey was open September 15th through September 30th.

How many people completed the survey?

In total 371 members and friends of Unity Unitarian completed the survey.

What did the survey cover?

The survey asked questions about the congregation, Sunday services and programs, the minister(s), Unity's Ends statements, and personal demographic information.

Use the QR Code below to view all results online



Question 1: Please indicate why you attend Unity Church-Unitarian, check as many as apply.

Factor	I first attended because of:	I continue to attend because of:
Adult Programs	36%	89%
Building/location	75%	70%
Religious education for children and youth	82%	36%
Choir/music	44%	87%
Other family members attended	67%	58%
Fellowship/ community	56%	84%
Minister(s)	61%	70%
UU beliefs	75%	80%
Worship	70%	83%
Social justice work	44%	89%
Community engagement	36%	90%

Question 2: How much do you value the following aspects of congregational life?

Aspect	Very little	Somewhat	Very much
Adult faith formation	12%	45%	43%
Celebrating common values	3%	29%	68%
Denominational involvement	36%	52%	12%
Fellowship / community	1%	25%	75%
Intellectual stimulation	<1%	24%	76%
Meditation or prayer	12%	45%	44%
Religious education for children and youth	25%	26%	48%
Social justice	4%	31%	65%
Spiritual growth	3%	33%	64%
Worship	7%	31%	62%

Question 3: Please indicate which of the following best describes your religious orientation.

Option	Percent
Agnosticism	28%
Atheism or Non-Theism	8%
Buddhism	11%
Earth-centered spirituality	33%
Eclectic	47%
Ethical Christianity	25%
Ethical Religion	37%
Humanism	27%
Islam	1%
Judaism	3%
Mysticism	27%
Naturalistic Theism	31%
Taoism	7%
Theism	13%
Theological Christianity	3%
Undecided	2%
Additional/Other	11%

Question 4: In 2018, the Unity Church-Unitarian Board of Trustees established Ends Statements, after extensive engagement with the congregation, to reflect Board policy goals for 2019 - 2023. Please indicate the relative importance for you personally of each statement.

Ends Statment	1 - Less important	2	3	4 - More important
Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships.	3%	11%	31%	54%
Ground ourselves in personal practice and communal worship that grows our capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening	4%	7%	31%	58%
Articulate our Unitarian Universalist faith identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it courageously with the world.	7%	19%	34%	39%
Know each other in all our fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people.	1%	11%	33%	55%
Generously give and openly receive compassionate care in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.	1%	7%	35%	56%
Discover and pursue our individual work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it.	2%	8%	29%	61%
Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.	7%	13%	28%	52%
Sustain and steward the church and our larger Unitarian Universalist movement for the future.	7%	26%	38%	29%

Question 5: Please indicate how you feel your personal involvement has contributed to progress toward the stated End, keeping in mind that progress can be personal or collective.

Ends Statment	Minimal to no involvement	My involvement helped a little	My involvement helped a lot
Create a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships.	32%	56%	12%
Ground ourselves in personal practice and communal worship that grows our capacity for wonder and spiritual deepening	24%	60%	16%
Articulate our Unitarian Universalist faith identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it courageously with the world.	35%	45%	20%
Know each other in all our fullness and create an ever-widening circle of belonging for all people.	19%	63%	18%
Generously give and openly receive compassionate care in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.	27%	54%	20%
Discover and pursue our individual work to advance justice, wholeness, and equity for people, our Earth, and all life on it.	26%	60%	14%
Create brave space for racial healing and dismantling dominant culture.	41%	50%	9%
Sustain and steward the church and our larger Unitarian Universalist movement for the future.	40%	45%	15%

Question 6: Indicate your personal level of interest in the following content areas for worship services.

Content area	Not interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested
Building a multicultural spiritual community and/or anti-racism work	7%	40%	53%
Community engagement and social justice	6%	42%	53%
Coping with life and cultivating self-worth	6%	40%	54%
Creative and artistic activities including music	13%	39%	48%
Developing personal spiritual practices	12%	44%	44%
Drawing connections between daily living, multiple traditions, and universal truths of the human experience/life	4%	33%	63%
Inspire reverence and awe	15%	33%	52%
Judeo-Christian traditions	36%	53%	12%
Global religions and traditions	14%	59%	28%
Philosophical ideas	9%	51%	40%
Religious implications of science and modern knowledge	10%	49%	41%
Spiritual growth	8%	33%	59%
Theological values	26%	46%	29%
Unitarian Universalist history	18%	60%	23%
Values and perspectives on social issues	3%	41%	55%

Question 7: How much emphasis should Unity Church place on the following?

Factor	Less	Same	More
Adult faith formation	3%	80%	17%
Building congregational community and connection	0%	59%	41%
Community/neighborhood involvement and engagement	2%	56%	42%
Fundraising and development	4%	88%	9%
Growth in anti-racism and multiculturalism	8%	45%	48%
Ministry with children and youth	2%	80%	18%
Relations with the UUA	8%	84%	8%
Relations with other local UU churches	6%	68%	26%
Social action/justice work	4%	58%	38%
Spiritual growth and practice	4%	55%	41%

Question 8: What did you miss about in-person services and/or church life more broadly during the pandemic?

faces in-person services programs Sunday service Congregational singing hearing music building run groups donuts face face circle coffee hour values worship services pews Conversations hard fellowship adult space virtual seeing people Personal connections in-person also missed meetings sense belonging friends wonderful opportunity participate sanctuary sitting know congregation time connect others experience praying Singing Sundays others also community quiet church come music many missed live music people social services something person hugs connections energy worship around together place seeing ability singing together support feeling family attending really missed choir worshipping together Zoom meet new people members physically Connecting Everything gathering felt seeing friends years children contact feel connected involved interaction watching shared sacred space Unity Sitting sanctuary Making Personal Interaction Wellspring Wednesday sense community congregants especially

Question 9: What changes made during the pandemic should Unity be sure to hold on to?

know continue offer really memorial services possible pandemic ability etc via ZOOM things many others participate drive recorded may great Providing programs shared YouTube will live make church Zoom option allows sure appreciate online service available Sunday services physically live stream reason virtual live-streaming services make winter Streaming services virtually access work church activities Continue livestream meetings use zoom Zoom virtual services services Maintain online loved option events Offering participation people especially Keep worship services think us person groups worship time attend remote attend person evenings good unable attend video streaming Sunday services Live streaming services new Streaming accessible on-line come opportunity yet still daily need regular also building recordings services accessibility service available group meetings Unity one services broadcast Live streaming Sunday in-person remotely

Question 10: If you were screening ministerial candidates using the following characteristics, how important would each be to you?

Characteristic	1 - Less important	2	3	4	5 - Absolutely critical
Administration/staff relationship skills	2%	9%	21%	28%	39%
Ability to expand membership	14%	26%	33%	20%	6%
Appreciation for art and music	6%	13%	30%	30%	20%
Building a multicultural spiritual home	4%	10%	22%	29%	35%
Committing to anti-racism work	6%	9%	21%	25%	39%
Decisions made are based on existing Unity Church values and mission; would respect Unity's traditions	6%	14%	34%	27%	20%
Developing personal spiritual practices	6%	19%	29%	30%	15%
Engaging lay leadership and members	1%	8%	29%	31%	31%
Financial development skills/building a culture of generosity	5%	18%	40%	29%	8%
Intellectual leadership skills	2%	6%	24%	34%	34%
Participates in denominational activities e.g. UUA	19%	36%	31%	10%	4%
Pastoral care skills/making pastoral calls	1%	10%	26%	33%	30%
Preaching ability/experience	0%	1%	4%	22%	74%
Religious education leadership for adults	7%	21%	38%	26%	7%
Religious education leadership for children and youth	7%	27%	35%	22%	9%
Sense of humor	2%	10%	21%	33%	34%
Social action/justice commitment and involvement	2%	8%	28%	27%	34%
Spiritual leadership skills	3%	8%	20%	24%	46%

Question 11: The UUA supports ministerial settlement procedures that do not discriminate because of race, color, disability, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin. Do you have any reservations with this policy?

Yes: 3% No: 97%

Question 12: It could become controversial if the new minister tried to change...

people worship associates program approach change will involved social action practices shared ministry Sunday services happen Staff liturgy MUCH may love place FOCUS format members choirs new Ministry things times music program education community work pageant sure commitment Christmas eve worship community outreach worship services sense music congregational Christmas pageant opinion service Support change musical church rituals think idea traditions merging waters Unity Traditional anything personally new minister Everything minister Sunday social justice make congregation leaders programs current importance long know Holiday Christmas controversial lay Candlelight Order service activities well Almost anything youth carol shout part role music emphasis

Question 13: It could be unifying and energizing if the new minister tried to change and implement...

energizing radical hospitality part think anything find Unsure person understanding welcoming stronger Unity less something experiences involvement younger Children longer great used worship services encourage sure begin bring create people lead worship new minister connection neighborhood think involved congregation families service building new answer community activities church focus members etc Ways continuing groups young adults change diverse social justice programs one work know already opportunities even outreach idea see within diversity education different add things together Social gender make Sunday services need new ideas perhaps don t know life

Question 14: How open to change is Unity Church- Unitarian? **56/100**

Question 15: Unity Church - Unitarian has a flexible enough structure to implement new ideas easily. **59/100**

Question 16: Unity Church - Unitarian focuses on mission, our Ends, and the greater good, rather than the strong preference of some individuals. **71/100**

Question 17: There is a high level of trust in leadership at Unity Church - Unitarian. **79/100**

Question 18: Unity Church - Unitarian has a core group of leaders able to lead change in a non-anxious way. **73/100**

Question 19: There are opportunities for congregants/me to share leadership of the church in meaningful ways. **73/100**

Question 20: Unity Church - Unitarian does a good job of having difficult conversations and staying in relationship. **69/100**

Question 21: Unity Church - Unitarian's mission, ministry, and Ends continue to adapt to changing conditions in the world. **77/100**

Question 22 continued the Board's Ends survey question.

Question 23: What is your membership status?

Status	Percent
Voting member (signed book and pledge or received pledge waiver)	86%
Member (signed book but not current pledge or waiver)	4%
Friend (have not signed Unity's membership book)	8%
Other	2%

Question 24: How long have you been associated with this congregation?

Time	Percent
Less than one year	2%
1-3 years	9%
4-7 years	14%
8-12 years	13%
13-20 years	16%
21-30 years	18%
31-45 years	16%
46+ years	10%

Question 25: What word(s) do you currently use to describe your gender identity and/or gender expression? *Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity’s Annual Congregational Survey

Gender	Percent
Female	55%
Male	26%
Other Response	2%
No Response	18%

Question 26: What word(s) do you currently use to describe your sexual orientation? *Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity’s Annual Congregational Survey

Sexual Orientation	Percent
Heterosexual	67%
Gay	2%
Lesbian	4%
Bisexual	3%
Queer	2%
Pansexual	1%
Asexual	1%
Multiple	1%
Questioning	1%
No Response	19%

Question 27: In what year were you born? *Note: Years of birth have been translated into age ranges

Age	Percent
Under 15	0%
15-19	0%
20-29	<1%
30-39	4%
40-49	4%
50-59	12%
60-69	19%
70 and above	31%
No Response	16%

Question 28: What word(s) do you currently use to describe your race and/or ethnicity? *Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity’s Annual Congregational Survey

Race/Ethnicity	Percent
African American/ Black/African	1%
Asian and Pacific Islander	1%
Person of Color + White (people who identify as part Person of Color and part white)	1%
White	79%
Latino/a/x and Hispanic	0%
Native / Indigenous	0%
Person of Color + Person of Color (people whose racial identity includes two POC identities)	0%
No Response	18%

Question 29: What is your education?

Education	Percent
Some high school	0%
High school diploma	0%
Some college	4%
Undergraduate college degree	27%
Graduate school degree	68%
Other	1%

Question 30: What is your relationship/marital status?

Relationship/Marital status	Percent
Single	10%
Married	71%
Divorced	8%
Widowed	5%
Separated	1%
Living with partner(s)	5%

Question 31: Do you have children under the age of 18 living at home? *Note: Reported as percent of responses with child(ren) in each group

Age group	Percent
Under 2	1%
3 to 6	2%
7 to 12	5%
13 to 18	8%

Question 32: What words do you currently use to describe your household financial situation?

*Note: Responses have been categorized using the same framework as Unity’s Annual Congregational Survey

Financial Situation	Percent
Financially secure	38%
Financially secure but concerned	2%
Financially secure for now	24%
More than enough	12%
Paycheck to paycheck	3%
Unexpected bill from a problem	2%
Other response	1%
No response	11%

Question 33: What is your household’s current annual pledge amount?

Amount	Percent
Under \$300	12%
\$301-\$500	4%
\$501-\$800	11%
\$801-\$1200	10%
\$1201-\$1700	13%
\$1701-\$2400	10%
\$2401-\$3000	12%
\$3001-\$4500	12%
\$4501-\$6500	6%
\$6500 and above	10%

Question 34: How would you characterize your Sunday attendance in a non-pandemic year?

Attendance	Percent
Less than 5 times	7%
5-10 times	5%
11-20 times	14%
21-30 times	26%
31-40 times	25%
41 times or more	24%

Question 35: In a typical month, how many participation or volunteer hours go to Unity activities or programs other than attendance of a Sunday service?

Hours	Percent
Less than 1	23%
1-3 hours	32%
4-7 hours	24%
8-12 hours	13%
12 or more hours	8%