

COMMUNITY OF FAITH SURVEY RESULTS

EPWORTH UNITED CHURCH

May 2019

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Churchgoers were invited to complete surveys to determine the needs of the congregation in order to facilitate the work of the search committee in finding a new minister. A total of 50 responded and of this, 33 (66%) were women and 16 (32%) were men. One respondent (2%) did not indicate a gender.

The results for “Tell Us About Yourself” are shown below in Table 1. Most of the respondents were members that were greater than 66 years of age. Most attended weekly and largely for fellowship/community and the sermons. The music was somewhat less preferred as a reason for attendance, especially for the men. None indicated that they never attended. Those that checked “Other” indicated their reasons for attendance or infrequent attendance as “kid’s ministry” (time with children during the service?), health issues and prior commitments. Most respondents indicated that they were involved in activities, the most popular being greeting, fund-raising dinners, and counting of offering. The least participation was in youth activities and Sunday School. More men were involved in counting offering, the “Breakfast Bunch” and fund-raising dinners and more women were involved in choir, bells and Bible study.. A small percentage overall (28 %) did not indicate any participation. This was more true for the men (44 %) than for the women (21%). Most indicated a willingness to participate, especially the women.

Table 1

A.

Tell Us About Yourself

Age

Gender	<15	16 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 50	51 to 65	66+
Male	0 %	0 %	0 %	6 % (1)	6 % (1)	88 % (14)
Female	0 %	0 %	0 %	15 % (5)	18 % (6)	67 % (22)
Unknown	0 %	0 %	0%	0 %	0	2 % (1)
Overall	0 %	0 %	0%	12 % (6)	14 % (7)	76 % (37)

Membership Status

Gender	Member	Adherent	Not Indicated
Male	93 % (15)	6 % (1)	0 %
Female	75 % (25)	12 % (4)	12 % (4)
Unknown	2 % (1)	0 %	0 %

Overall	82 % (41)	10% (5)	8 % (4)
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Attendance

	Weekly	Bi-Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Never
Male	75 % (12)	12 % (2)	0%	12 % (2)	0%
Female	66 % (22)	15 % (5)	3 % (1)	15 % (5)	0%
Unknown	2 % (1)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overall	70 % (35)	14 % (7)	2 % (1)	14 % (7)	0%

Reason for Attendance

Gender	Fellowship/Community	Sermon	Music	Other
Male	81 %	75%	50%	18 %
Female	78 %	78 %	78 %	9 %
Overall	80 %	78 %	70 %	8 %

Activity Involvement

	Male	Female	Overall
Activity Nights	6 %	0 %	4 %
Breakfast Bunch	37 %	3 %	14 %
U.C.W.	0 %	39 %	28 %
Choir	12 %	21 %	18 %
Bells	0 %	15 %	10 %
Bible Study	12 %	15 %	14 %
Sunday School	6 %	3 %	4 %
Sunday Suppers	25 %	15 %	20%
Fund-Raising Dinners	50 %	33 %	38 %
Greeters	50 %	33 %	40 %
Minister's Assistant	25 %	15 %	20 %
Counting of Offering	62 %	18 %	34 %
Youth Activities	6 %	9 %	8%

Not Involved	44 %	21 %	28 %
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Willingness to Participate in Any Activities

	Male	Female	Overall
Yes	75 %	85 %	82 %
No	25 %	15 %	18 %

The results for “Who Are We?” are shown below and in Table 2.

Strengths

The most frequently mentioned strength was our welcoming, friendly congregation with great fellowship. This was followed by favourable comments about our minister, our community involvement and our history. There was a reference to “the life of the church, its congregation and community”. The music, in general, and the choir and bell choir, in particular were frequently mentioned. Other strengths were the dedication of the members to church duties, the beautiful, multipurpose church, the church as a place of faith, the Vacation Bible School, and the UCW.

Growth Areas

By far, the most frequently mentioned (38 times) growth area was the need to encourage youth and families to join and, in the words of one respondent, “not just by serving food”. Other frequently mentioned areas were retention of attendees, making the service more modern and relevant to the community and modern life and as another respondent pointed out, mentioning news events as they relate to Christianity. Improving first impressions, having more outreach and showing more interest in Bible study were also mentioned.

Hopes and Dreams

By far, the most frequently mentioned hope (24 times) was for the church to grow and survive. One respondent hoped that it would “grow in the spirit”. A number of respondents mentioned the hope that more youth would attend, one saying that innovative ideas and thinking outside of the box should be used to this end. Others mentioned finding a new minister, getting a lay minister, making the church a more upbeat and exciting place, and more accepting Jesus as their Lord and Saviour as their hopes.

The other results for “Who Are We?” are shown in Table 2. More men and women chose “Senior’s Programs” as programs that should be offered, followed by “Community Outreach”, “Youth Programs” (more men than women) and Bible study. “Children’s Mid-Week Groups” and “Other” (dances, fund-raising activities, which we already have and adult social activities---don’t know what was meant by this) came last.

The sermon was chosen as the most important worship activity overall. This was followed by “Welcoming”, although more by men than women, and “Special Services”, also more by men than by women. The least important components were “Sung Prayers” and “Preparation for Worship”.

In response to the question of what would make the worship service more meaningful, most indicated making the service shorter. The times suggested were 45 to 60 minutes, 60 minutes, and 45 minutes. Frequently mentioned was the use of contemporary music. Using more gospel and traditional music was also mentioned. Other responses were going back to a more traditional service (we already have one), a return to jokes at the beginning of the service, using the blue book more, more sermons dealing with salvation, heaven and hell, less responsive reading, an “Elder Church” for those 55+ and an “Elder Sunday School”. A number of respondents indicated that the service was just fine as it is.

In the overall sense, “Community Outreach” was judged to be most important followed by “Outreach”. Don’t know what this last category refers to (see survey sheet). Possibly it refers to outreach in general. The least important was “World Outreach”.

Table 2.

B.

Who Are We?

Programs and Social Activities Desired

	Male	Female	Overall
Children’s Midweek Groups	31 %	12%	18 %
Senior’s Programs	69%	61%	62 %
Youth Programs	69%	36%	46 %
Mission Projects	25 %	24 %	24 %
Single’s Activities	31 %	21 %	24 %
Community Outreach	63 %	56 %	58 %
Bible Study	44 %	40 %	40 %
Other	0 %	9 %	6 %

Importance of Worship Service Components

	Male	Female	Overall
Welcoming	87.5 %	61%	68 %
Sermon	100%	70 %	76 %
Sharing of Celebrations and Community Concerns	69%	61 %	62 %
Lay Involvement	75%	33 %	46 %
Youth Involvement	63 %	33 %	42 %
Preparation for Worship	19 %	30 %	26 %
Communion	63 %	48 %	52 %
Choir Anthem	69%	64 %	64 %
Special Services	83 %	67 %	70 %
Children's Time	69%	58 %	60 %
Scripture	56%	58 %	56 %
Sung Prayers	38 %	42 %	40 %
Hymns	50 %	73 %	64 %
Hymn Sings	50 %	52 %	50 %

Importance of Outreach

	Male			Female			Overall		
	very	somewhat	not very	very	somewhat	not very	very	somewhat	not very
Outreach (in general?)	44%	50%	6 %	57 %	48 %	0%	49 %	49 %	2 %
Mission and Service	20 %	47 %	33 %	38 %	56 %	6%	32 %	53 %	15 %
Community Outreach	75 %	25 %	0 %	79 %	21 %	0 %	78 %	22 %	0 %
World Outreach	19 %	63 %	18 %	16 %	77 %	6 %	17 %	72 %	11 %

The results for “Our New Minister” are shown below and in Table 3.

Regarding “Worship”, the most desirable skill overall was the ability to lead uplifting and energetic services and the least desirable one was the ability to encourage youth and laity involvement in services.

Regarding “Faith Formation...”, although there were some differences between men and women, most overall responses were similar but the ability to support youth and senior’s ministry was judged somewhat more important. The least desirable was the ability to develop lay leadership.

Regarding “Pastoral Care”, as above, although there were some differences between men and women, overall responses were again similar, with the ability to respond promptly judged somewhat more important.

Regarding “Outreach and Social Action”, once again, although there were differences between men and women, the overall responses were similar with willingness to be involved in community activities judged somewhat more important.

In comparing these four categories, “Pastoral Care” was ranked the most important attribute and “Faith Formation...” was ranked the least.

Table 3.

C.

	Desirable Skills and Attributes		
	Male	Female	Overall
Ability to lead uplifting and energetic services relating gospel to everyday life	100 %	85 %	88 %
Ability to plan and conduct children’s time	69 %	76 %	72 %
Ability to encourage youth and laity involvement in services	75 %	70 %	70 %
Ability to communicate with others regarding Sunday worship, bulletin and announcements	75 %	75 %	74 %

Faith Formation and Christian Development

	Male	Female	Overall
Ability to encourage and support the work of the church school, its coordinator and the Christian Development Committee	38 %	58 %	50 %
Ability to assist the congregation in its faith journey and to grow spiritually by leading Bible Study programs and study groups	56 %	58 %	56 %
Ability to encourage inter-generational community building activities within the congregation	75 %	58 %	62 %
Ability to encourage and support youth and Senior's ministry	75 %	67 %	68 %
Ability to develop lay leadership	56 %	18 %	30 %

Pastoral Care

	Male	Female	Overall
Ability to respond promptly to a congregant's crisis	100 %	85 %	88 %
Ability and willingness to visit	88 %	79 %	80 %
Ability to relate to all congregants	94 %	79 %	82 %

Outreach and Social Action

	Male	Female	Overall
Willingness to be involved in community activities	81 %	73 %	74 %
Willingness to encourage the congregation to be involved in community activities	75 %	67 %	70 %

The results of the ranking of attributes of a new minister are shown below. Most averages, whether male, female or overall are similar with the exception of fun and sense of humour which were ranked least. With the possible exception of the last two mentioned, there are probably no significant differences statistically between any of the averages. One can only conclude, therefore, that all these attributes were judged to be desirable.

Ranking of Desirable Attributes for a New Minister

	Average Rating		
	Male	Female	Overall
good listener	4.43	4.75	4.63
friendly	4.79	4.58	4.66
open	4.67	4.50	4.56
fun	3.93	3.87	3.89
sense of humour	3.50	3.81	3.70
enthusiastic	4.29	4.59	4.47
passionate about Christ and the Bible	4.62	4.79	4.73
life-long learner	4.50	4.18	4.29
knowledge of scripture	4.58	4.61	4.60
understands humility	4.14	4.21	4.18
organized	4.00	4.27	4.17
encouraging	4.38	4.48	4.44
caring to all	4.38	4.68	4.57
compassionate	4.71	4.67	4.68
understanding/empathetic	4.67	4.64	4.65
able to work with others	4.93	4.78	4.84
possesses conflict resolution skills	4.67	4.43	4.51
brings out the best in others	4.42	4.21	4.28
professionalism	4.08	4.43	4.31
leadership skills to nurture and encourage people	4.00	4.27	4.18

challenges people to probe and think more deeply	4.25	4.14	4.18
able to work with congregation for a common goal/vision	4.54	4.43	4.47
able to work with congregation to create new vision	4.54	4.36	4.43
able to balance vocation and home life	4.29	4.61	4.49
self-aware	4.29	4.48	4.41
community minded	3.92	4.25	4.13

Other Thoughts

The following are other comments made by respondents: look at why other churches are successful; our church is “stiff” compared to the “fun” church at Ruthven; our service is “stale” and needs to be “upbeat”; apocalyptic events in the news should be mentioned as evidence of the end times; Epworth should not be a place “where we always have done it this way”; the entire team of a potential minister and his wife should be considered...the latter should be as supportive of the minister as is the current minister’s wife.