

Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge

Congregational Survey 2020

This document summarizes the survey administered from 29 March to 19 April 2020. The purpose of the survey was to identify who we are as a congregation, why we value our church, and what we are looking for in a new senior minister. The survey was modified from a template provided by the UUA as part of their guidance for the search process. This will be the most comprehensive source of demographic information about the congregation. Qualitative responses will also be synthesized from cottage meetings and focus groups in a separate summary.

We first announced the survey in early 2020 as part of the timeline for the search. Once the survey was live as a Google Survey, a link was sent to the entire email list. The link was also posted on the church's Facebook page and announced at virtual services. We sent postcard reminders to about 350 households on the UCBR mailing list. We also established a mechanism for hard copy surveys, which were requested by two members. The survey went live just as we were entering quarantine for COVID-19. We can't know exactly how this upheaval might have influenced participation or responses. We emphasized that respondents should look beyond the current situation, but that may have been difficult.

We analyzed 151 responses, for a response rate of 41% of members. We had no mechanism to require membership in the church to complete the survey, but 97% of respondents identified as members. Again, we can't know how the pandemic might have biased either participation or responses. Are the demographics revealed here representative of our church? Are we really this old, this white, this straight? Looking out at the congregation on Sunday mornings, do we think we see more diversity than we really do? Objectively, we can recognize some biases in responses. For example, gay men are underrepresented. We advertised the survey widely and through multiple approaches, so we suspect biases were based on who chose to complete the survey, not on who was aware it was happening.

Recognizing these limitations to the survey, we present these summary results with confidence that they accurately represent the responses that were submitted.

1. What is your favorite thing about our congregation?



2. What are the top three functions of our congregation?



3. What are the top three functions of our senior minister?



4. How often in the past year did you participate in...

	weekly	monthly	2-3x	yearly	never
Sunday morning worship service	63%	25%	8%	3%	1%
Sunday morning volunteer (RE, greeter, usher, etc.)	15%	28%	14%	5%	37%
Choir	11%	3%	2%	2%	81%
Special worship service (Christmas pageant, requiem, pride, blues, etc.)	8%	14%	44%	22%	12%
Non-Sunday service (solstice, Tenebrae)	6%	6%	33%	23%	32%
Branches	5%	51%	2%	1%	41%
Weekly activities (e.g. tai chi, book clubs, lunch bunch)	8%	13%	12%	11%	57%
Intergenerational activities (Halloween party, gumbo cookoff, crawfish boil, etc.)	2%	4%	40%	23%	30%
Social justice activity or event	5%	12%	41%	24%	18%
Governance (board meetings, congregational meetings)	2%	11%	46%	18%	24%
Committee meetings	3%	23%	17%	6%	52%
Fundraising support (pledge drive, auction, etc.)	2%	7%	20%	41%	29%
District, Regional, or General Assembly	0%	0%	1%	12%	87%

5. Have you participated in:

	% participation		
	multiple	once	never
OWL	15%	14%	72%
Beloved Conversations	16%	24%	60%
Cakes for the Queen of Heaven	16%	11%	74%

6. Which program, ministry, or activity helps you live a dynamic UU life?

Sunday services	45%
Branches	22%
Social justice/service work	13%

Within-church work (worship guild, greeting, committees, etc.)	5%
Book clubs/adult education	3%
Beloved Conversations	3%
RE and OWL	3%
Choir	3%
Pastoral care	2%
Cakes for the Queen of Heaven	1%
Special programs (workshops, retreats, etc.)	1%
District and GA events	1%
UU magazine	1%

7. Which program, ministry, or activity gives you the deepest sense of belonging?

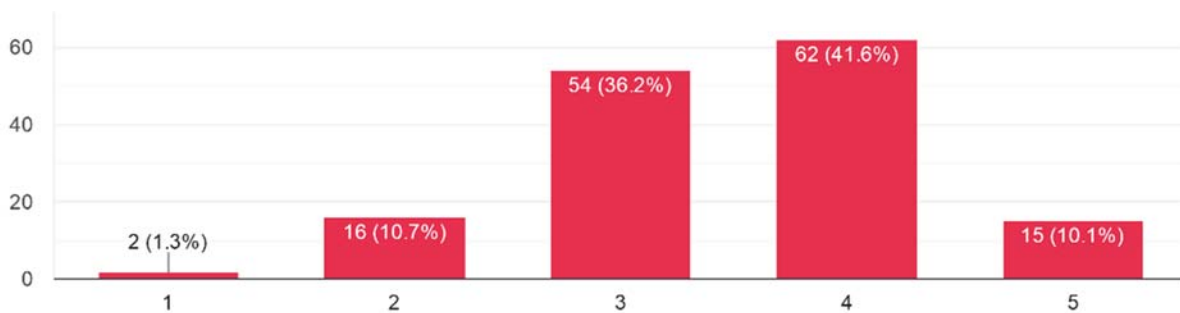
Sunday service, Sunday fellowship, lunch bunch	35%
Branches	25%
Social justice and service	9%
Within-church work (worship guild, greeting, committees, etc.)	8%
Choir	6%
RE, Days for Girls, Intergenerational activities	5%
Cakes for the Queen of Heaven	5%
Book clubs, other programs	3%
Earth-centered events	2%
Special services	1%

8. In which program, ministry, or activity have you experienced transcendence?

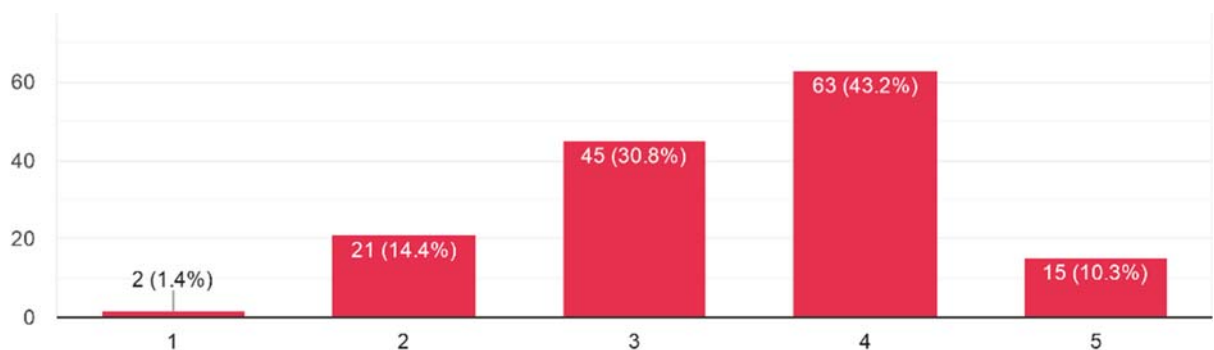
Sunday service	45%
Branches	5%
RE/OWL/Days for Girls/youth events	5%
Cakes for the Queen of Heaven	4%
Earth-centered events	4%
Social justice/service work	4%
Beloved Conversations	3%
Meditation group	3%
Building your Own Theology	1%
Governance	1%
Congregational Care Team	1%
Worship Guild	1%
General Assembly	1%
Pastoral care	1%

9. For these questions 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

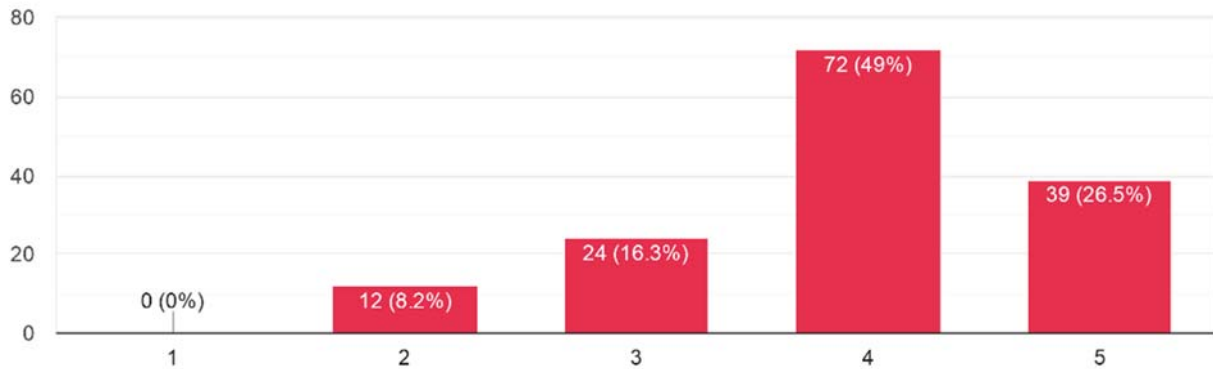
This congregation is generally open to change



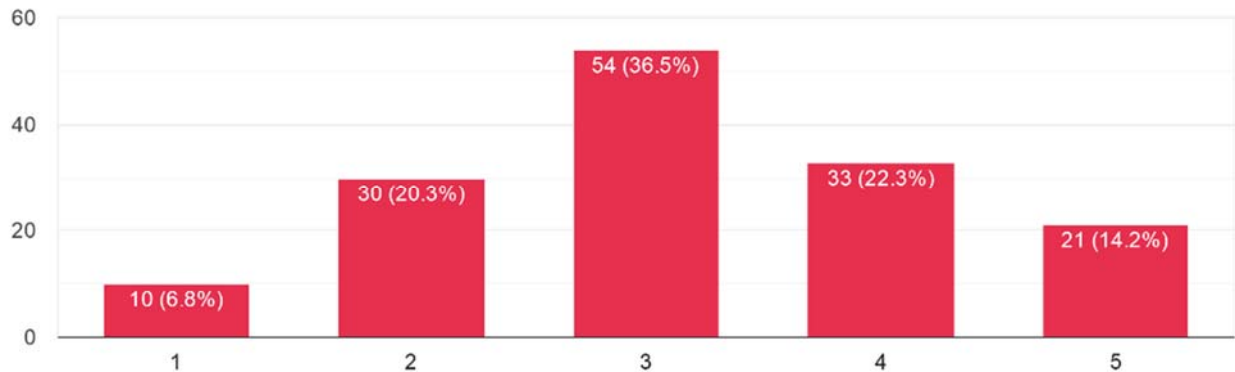
10. This congregation has a flexible enough structure to implement new ideas easily



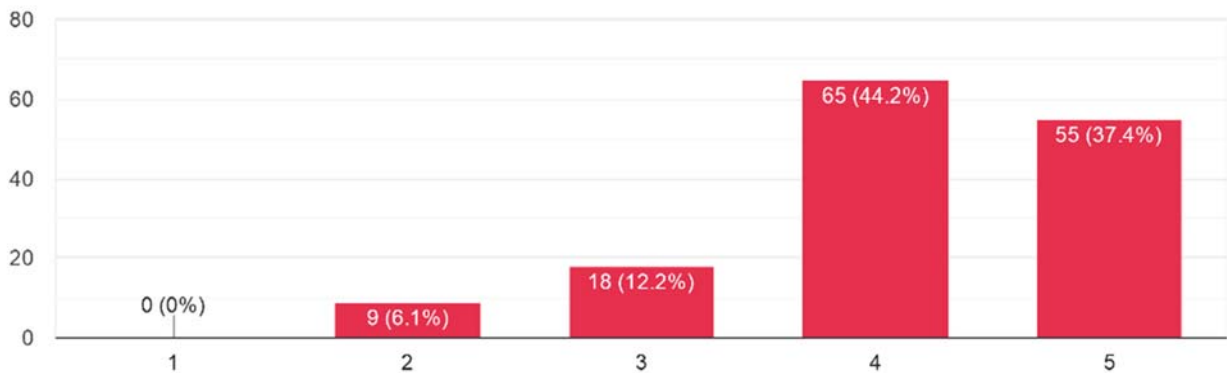
11. This congregation focuses on mission and the greater good, rather than the strong preference of some individuals



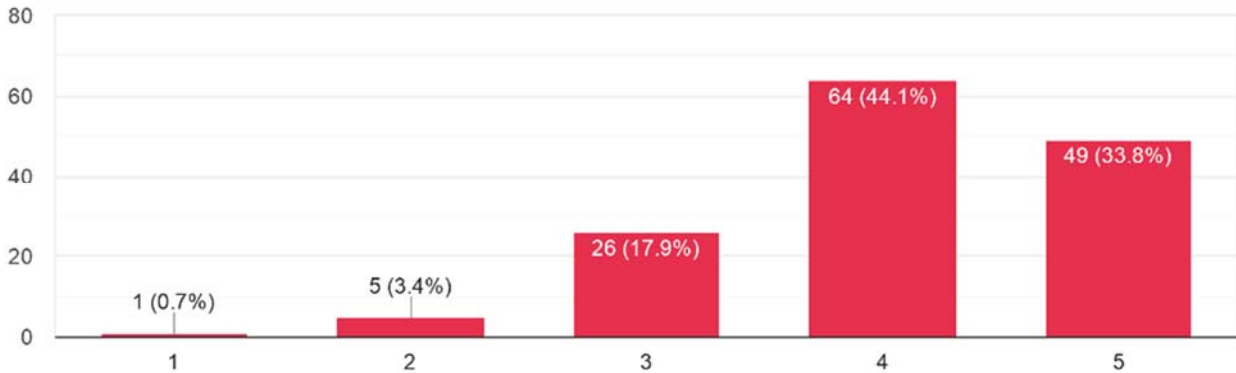
12. I have concerns about our congregation's financial sustainability



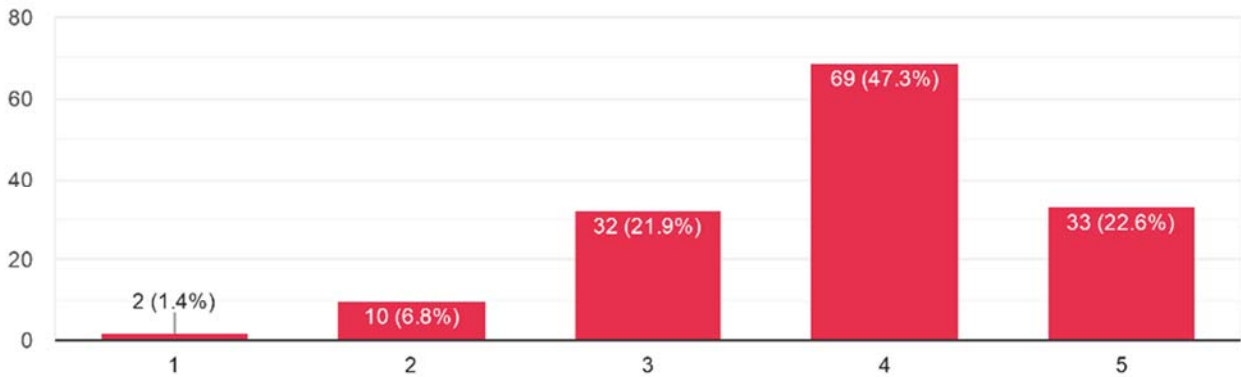
13. There is a high level of trust in leadership in this congregation



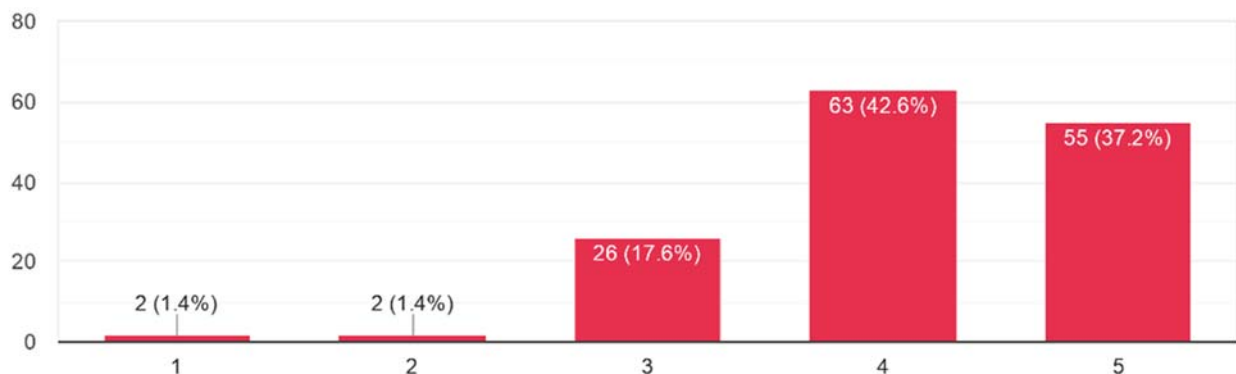
14. We have a core group of leaders able to lead in a non-anxious way



15. We do a good job of having difficult conversations while staying in relationship



16. Our mission and ministry continue to adapt to changing conditions in the world



17. Roles of the next minister - preferences	For me	For the congregation	For the future
Presenting inspiring and challenging Sunday services	76%	57%	18%
Supporting families and multi-generational ministries	20%	34%	73%
Prophetic role - helps us imagine our future and inspire us	38%	36%	67%
Pastoral role - provides pastoral care, and, by example shows us how to care for one another.	54%	67%	38%
Leading the overall ministry of our congregation	42%	64%	24%
Fostering a sense of community within the church	55%	55%	51%
Providing visible leadership in Baton Rouge	47%	47%	53%
Encouraging social justice programs	42%	39%	51%
Developing volunteers and lay leaders	13%	45%	41%
Supervising the church staff	17%	42%	9%
Supporting the music ministry	26%	30%	11%
Teaching classes and leading workshops	16%	22%	21%

18. It could become contentious if the new minister tried to change...

- 15% Rituals of the service
- 13% Social justice mission/involvement in Together Baton Rouge
- 13% Anything...too fast or with the wrong approach
- 11% The church's inclusivity or sense of community
- 8% The church's theology toward Christianity
- 8% Music programming
- 6% Governance or transparency*
- 5% Special services- blues, Tenebrae, Christmas pageant, etc.
- 4% The church's theology away from Universalist roots
- 4% RE, family ministry, or OWL programming*
- 4% Reduce or change the timing of services*
- 4% Roles of Nathan or the staff
- 2% The minister becoming too directly political
- 2% The minister applying pressure to contribute financially or otherwise

* In almost every case the context implied that the respondent was not in favor of change, but in a few cases this wasn't clear or the respondent wanted change but thought it would be contentious

19. It could be unifying and energizing if the new minister tried to...

- 12% Increase engagement for young adults, with families or not
- 12% Broaden or change the theology*
- 11% Increase community activism for social justice, environmental justice, reaching out to political conservatives
- 9% Increase transparency and communication
- 8% Change aspects of the service (few concrete suggestions offered)
- 7% Develop members to be involved and assume leadership
- 7% Increase ways for members to get to know each other
- 5% Develop new ideas for fundraising
- 5% Develop programs for spiritual growth for adults
- 4% Empower the staff
- 4% Change the music (not clear how- more music? Less music? Different music?)
- 3% Bring senior youth into services (from the context, in place of RE)
- 3% Move from 2 to 1 service
- 3% Change RE (not clear what the respondents envisioned)

Response rate was low for this. After discarding some items that were only mentioned once and could not be placed into the categories above, only 80 responses were analyzed.

*This included some suggestions: invite people of different faiths (to participate in services?), include more Earth-centered services, increase spirituality, decrease Christian emphasis, but some comments were too vague to know what the respondent envisioned.

20. If you didn't agree with something the minister said or did would you...

- 32% Write a note to the minister
- 25% Tell the minister immediately
- 15% Would think it said more about me than about the minister
- 15% Tell my closest friends
- 12% Keep my opinions to myself
- <1% Write a note to the board
- <1% Stop coming to church

Demographic data of respondents:

21. What is your age?

<1% under 18
3% 18-29
11% 30-39
8% 40-49
11% 50-59
34% 60-69
27% 70-79
6% over 80

22. What is your race or ethnic identity?

90% white, 6% multiracial, 3% black, <1% Hispanic, <1% Asian

23. Are you part of a multiracial family?

82% no, 12% yes, 6% maybe

24. What is your gender identity?

68% woman, 31% man, 1% all others

25. What is your sexual orientation?

83% heterosexual
7% bisexual
4% lesbian
2% gay man
2% pansexual
2% all others

26. What is your relationship status?

- 57% married
- 14% in a committed relationship
- 12% single
- 9% widowed
- 8% separated or divorced

27. How many children under the age of 18 are there in your family?

22% of respondents have children under 18. Of these, 50% have one child, 44% have two children, and 6% have three children.

28. If you have children under the age of 18 in your family, please check all that apply.

20% of respondents have children at home at least some of the time. Of these, 20% are children who are not in the house full time

29. If you have children under the age of 18 in your family, how many are currently participating in the Religious Education program at UCBR?

17% of respondents have children in RE

30. How many of your children have participated in OWL?

30% of respondents had some or all children do OWL

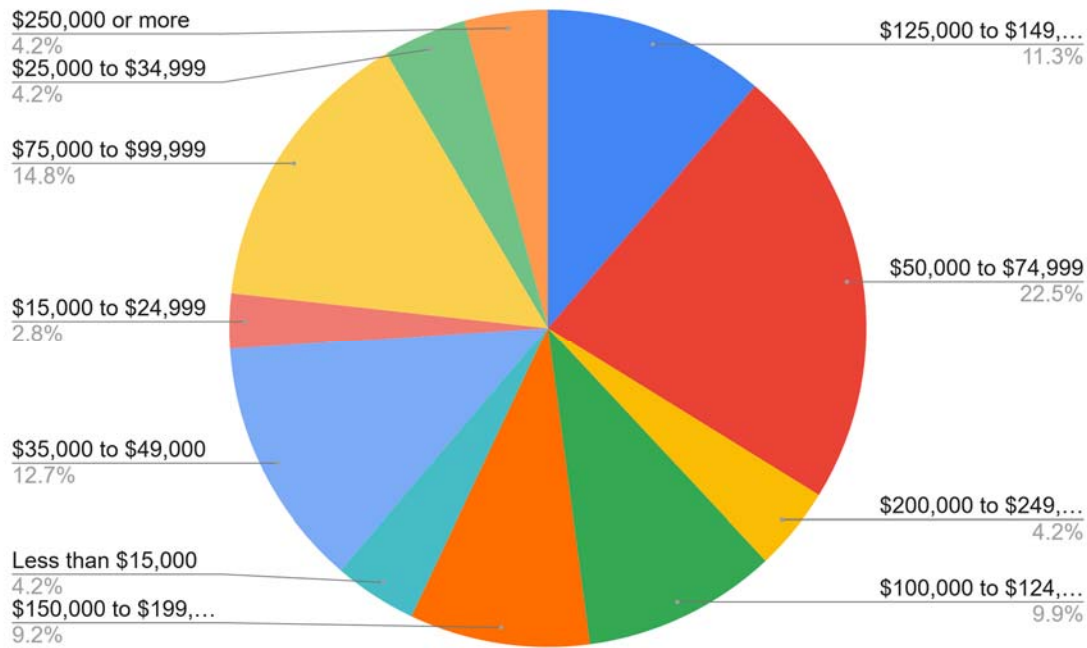
31. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- 33% Masters
- 28% 4 year degree
- 17% PhD
- 11% Professional degree
- 7% Some college
- 4% All others

32. What is your current employment status?

- 45% Retired
- 29% Employed full time
- 7% Self-employed/freelance
- 7% Employed part time
- 10% Unemployed, etc.

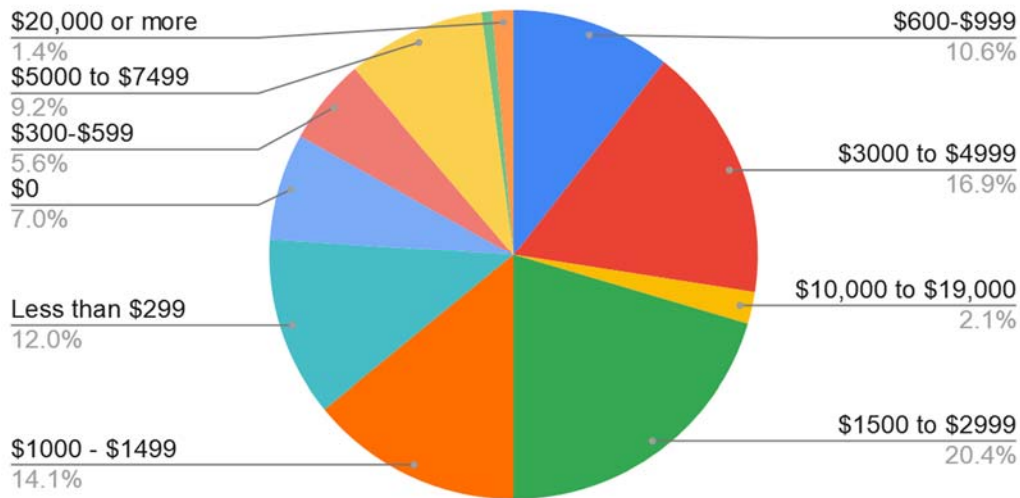
33. What is your household annual income?



Income (rows) and pledge (columns)

Sum of count	Colu											Grand
Row Labels	Less than \$299	\$300-\$599	\$600-\$999	\$1000-\$1499	\$1500 to \$2999	\$3000 to \$4999	\$5000 to \$7499	\$7500 to \$9999	\$10,000 to \$19,000	\$20,000 or more	(blank)	Grand
Less than \$15,000	2	3	1									6
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1		1		1		1					4
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2	3		1								6
\$35,000 to \$49,000	2	3	1	1	2	4	3	1			1	18
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1	1	2	4	7	9	7	1				32
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1	2		2	1	5	5	4			1	21
\$100,000 to \$124,999		1	1	2	2	3	2	2			1	14
\$125,000 to \$149,999		1	2	1	4	3	3	2				16
\$150,000 to \$199,999		1		2	1	3	3	3				13
\$200,000 to \$249,999		2			1	1			1	1		6
\$250,000 or more						1				1	2	6
(blank)				2	1					1		9
Grand Total	9	17	8	15	20	29	24	13	1	3	2	151

34. What is your current household annual giving pledge, whether you pledge as individuals or as a family?



35. What do you take into consideration when deciding an amount to give?

- 60%** My budget- income and other expenses
- 11% Balancing with other charitable contributions
- 10% The church's needs
- 9% My desire to support the work of the church
- 7% Increasing my pledge to meet or approach a fair share
- 2% I can't afford to give
- 2% I give what I can without pledging

36. When was the last time you increased your giving to UCBR?

- 58%** This year
- 21% Last year
- 13% >1 year ago
- 7% Never

37. What inspired an increase (or decrease) in giving?

- 31% **The needs of the church**
- 21% An increase in my ability to pay
- 12% The pledge drive
- 10% Increasing toward a fair share
- 9% A change in my ability to pay (unspecified positive or negative)
- 8% Decreased ability to pay, including job loss
- 6% The challenge from Nathan or Joel*
- 3% A desire to do the right thing
- 2% I am attending more

*These respondents specifically mentioned the ministers. Other respondents who said, for instance 'I was asked' were categorized within 'pledge drive.'

38. On average, how long does it take you to travel to UCBR from your home?

- 49% **15-30 minutes**, 44% <15 minutes, 7% >30 minutes

39. What is your relationship to UCBR?

- 97% of respondents were members

40. How long have you been a Unitarian Universalist?

- 3% Not UU
- 5% <1 year
- 7% 1-2 years
- 10% 3-5 years
- 10% 6-10 years
- 20% 11-20 years
- 44% **>20 years**

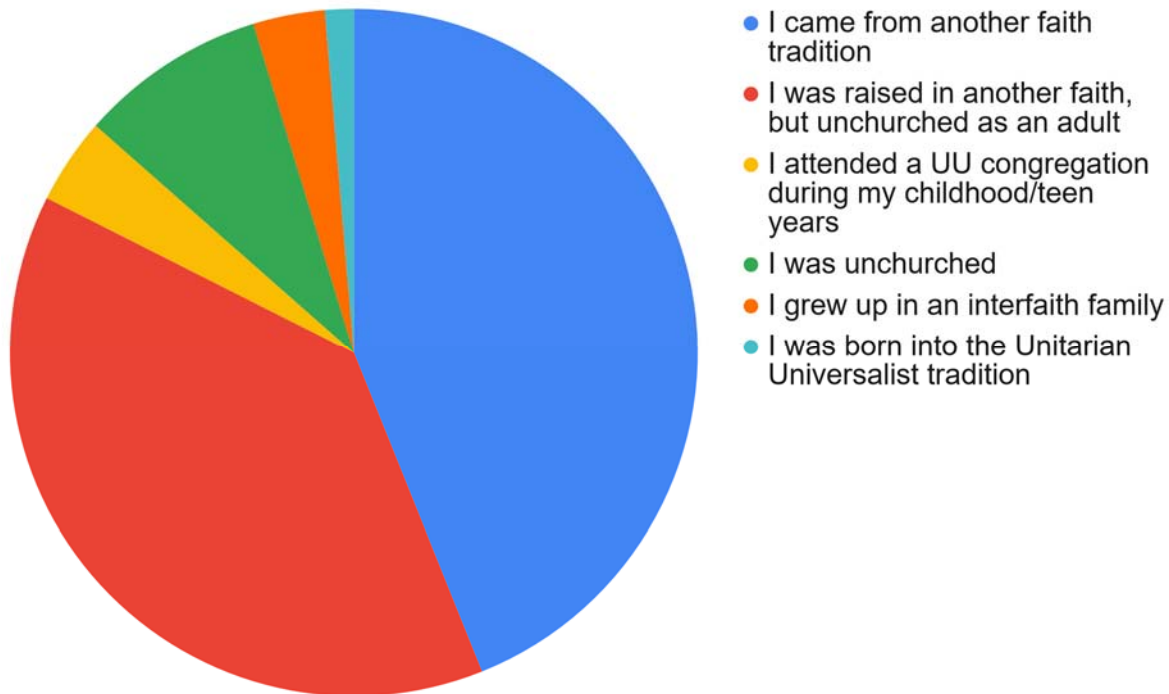
41. How long have you attended UCBR?

This is almost identical to #40. About 10% of respondents were UU before attending UCBR. Of these, about 65% have been attending UCBR for > 5 years. The respondents who identified as 'not UU' have all attended UCBR for > 5 years.

42. Besides this congregation, are you a member of another congregation?

93% no, 6% another unspecified religious community, 3% druid or pagan, 1% another UU congregation (some respondents reported multiple other congregation)

43. What is your faith background?



44. How would you rate your spiritual life?

(1=I'm not spiritual; 5=spirituality is fully integrated into all I do)

1	1%
2	2%
3	29%
4	40%
5	28%

45. Do you have a regular spiritual practice?

52% yes, 29% maybe, 19% no

46. What brought you to UCBR?

- 15% UU principles and theology match my views
- 15% I wanted a spiritual home for my children
- 14% I was looking for a community that shared my values
- 14% A friend got me interested
- 11% I knew about UU/this church and sought it out when I moved to BR
- 9% This church's acceptance of me (including sexual orientation and theology)
- 7% I left a Christian church
- 5% I came after a crisis in my life
- 4% I like the church's liberal views
- 3% Family (not clear if these respondents were raised in the church or were parents)
- 2% The services
- 2% Steve Crump
- 2% The church's commitment to social justice

(Some respondents had more than one answer, so the sum is >100%)

47. What keeps you here?

- 40% The church community**
- 17% UU/UCBR values
- 17% The services/sermons/minister/music
 - Of these, 19% explicitly mentioned music, and 14% mentioned Nathan
- 9% Social justice and the opportunity serve
- 6% The church meets my needs and challenges me
- 5% RE and need for my family
- 4% The inclusiveness
- 2% The church's progressive politics
- 1% Branches

(Some respondents had more than one answer, so the sum is >100%)

48. Why should our future senior minister join the next chapter of our journey?

Grow our numbers
The congregation is strong and supportive
Lead a committed congregation
Make a difference in Baton Rouge
Fulfill the area's need for UCBR Food and culture
Work for a promising future
Build from our history