



FACT 2023— United Church of Christ

Study findings and 2020 Comparisons

Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data
United Church of Christ
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Overview

Aims and Methods

Topics

- Facilities
- Leadership
- Church Activities
- Mission and Identity
- Technology
- Finances
- Pandemic Experiences

Overview—About FACT 2023

- The 2023 FACT survey is the latest in a series of national, interfaith surveys conducted since 2000
 - Previous FACT surveys were released in 2000, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2015, and 2020
- The 2023 FACT survey was especially collected to assess trends among congregations that have emerged since the last survey in 2020
 - The 2023 FACT survey is also part of the Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC) project
 - <https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/>
 - The next FACT survey will be conducted in 2025
- For more information on the overall FACT survey effort and details on the 2023 data collection, visit [Faith Communities Today](#)

Overview—UCC Survey Distribution

- Random sample drawn of 1,000 churches
 - 4,603 UCC congregations as of Dec. 31, 2022
- Survey in the field from March 7–April 3
- 296 useable responses received
 - 30% response rate
 - Responses weighted to match UCC geographic prevalence



Facilities

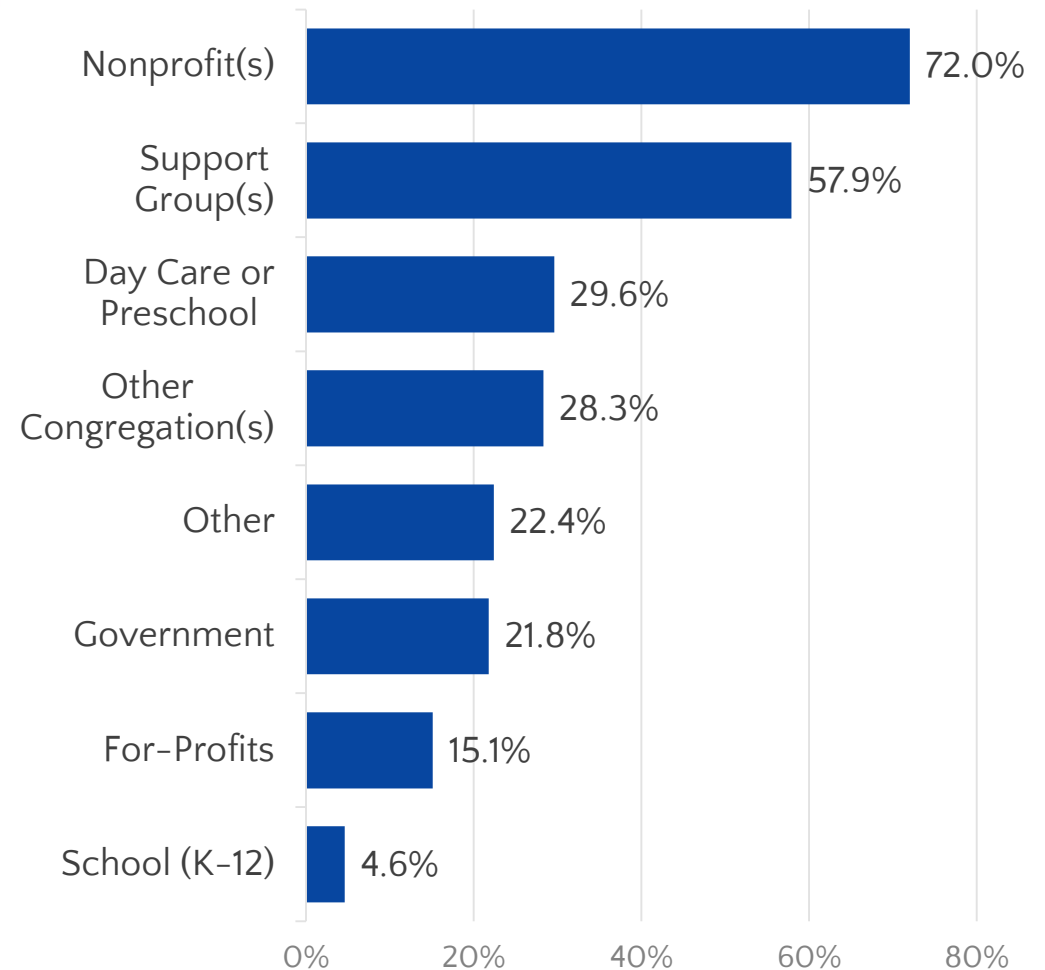
Forms, Uses, and Satisfaction

Facilities: Uses and Compensation

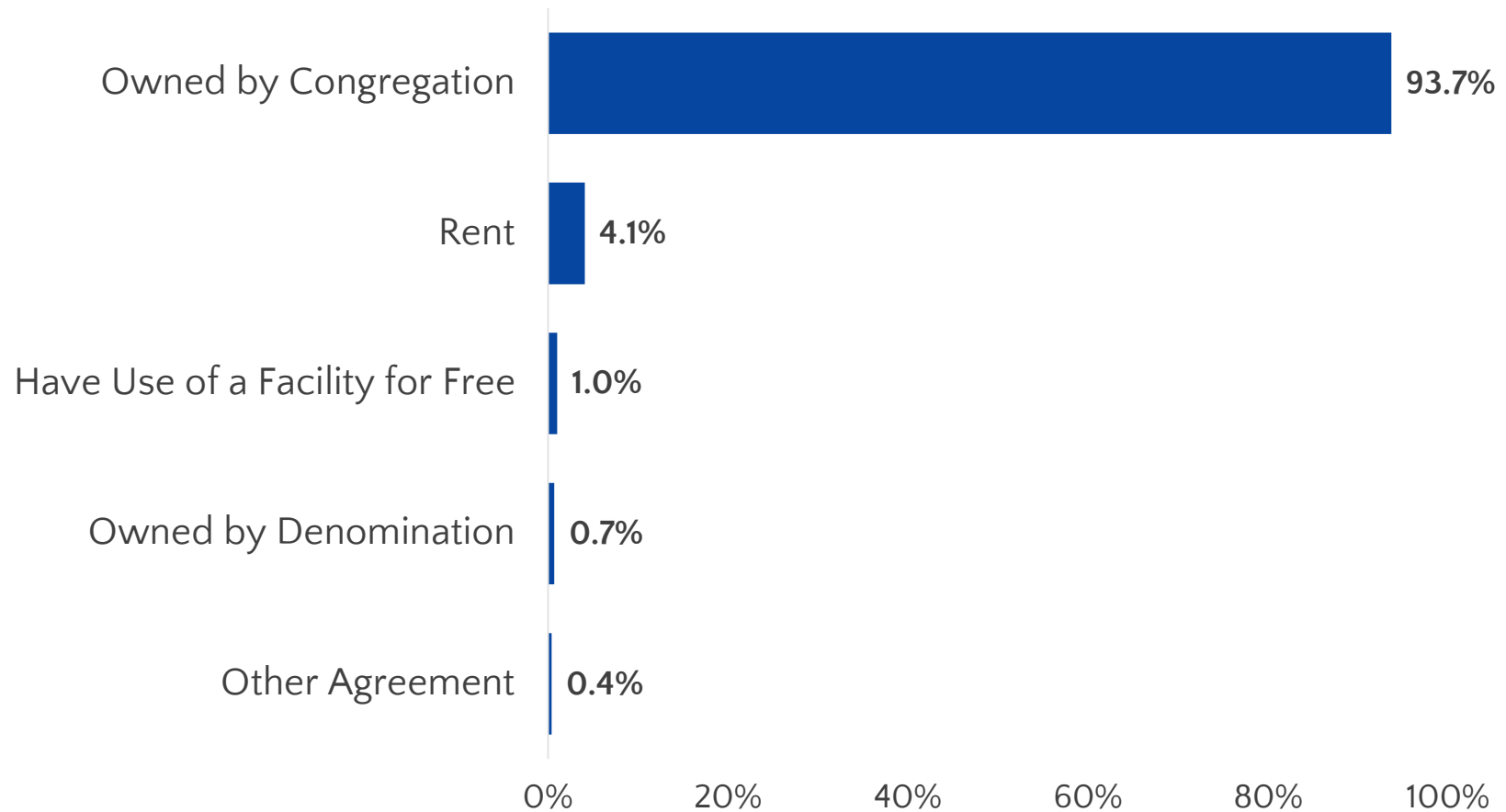
Use of Space by Other Organizations:

- 70.5% of congregations share space with other organizations
- How Organizations Provide Compensation for Space (organizations could choose all that apply):
 - Rent – 63.9%
 - Free Use – 60.6%
 - Expense Sharing – 23.1%
 - Other – 18.8%

Organizations Using Congregational Facilities

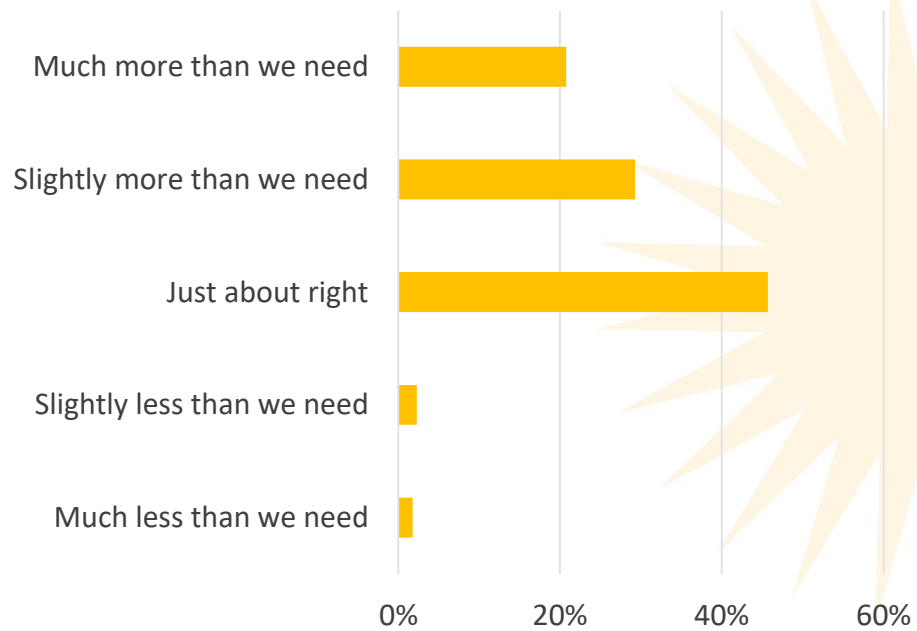


Which best describes your congregation's relationship to its primary place of worship?

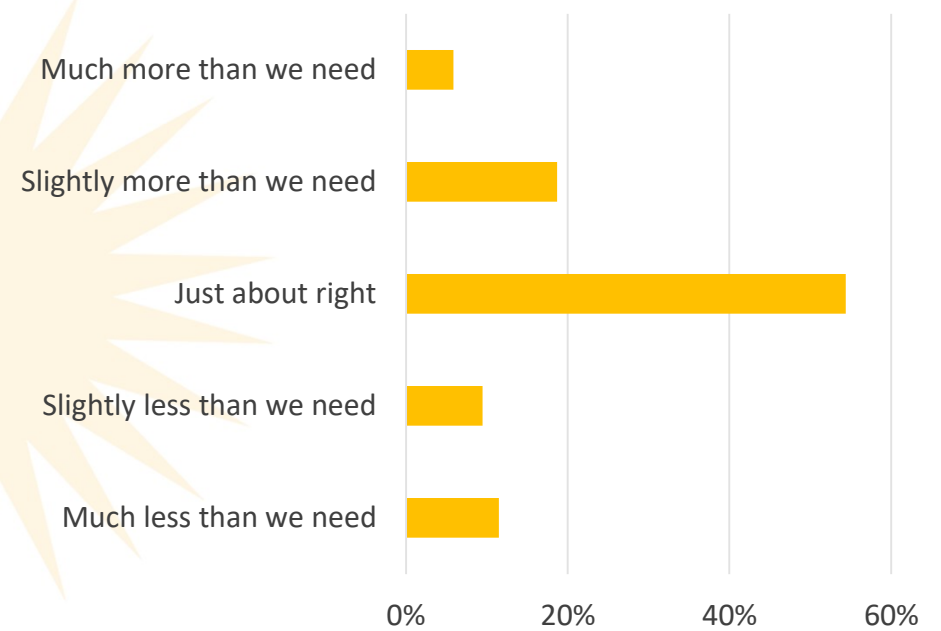


Facility Satisfaction

Space for Religious Services/Worship



Space for Parking



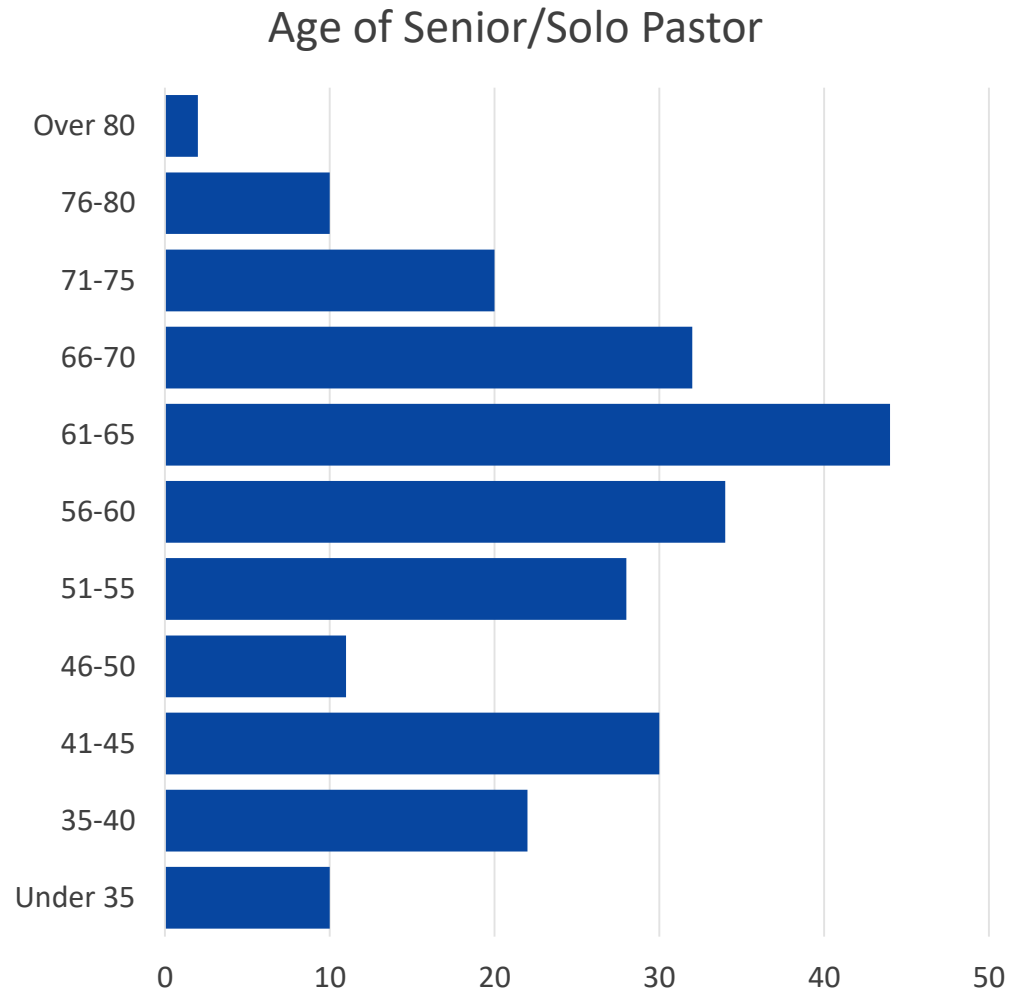


Leadership

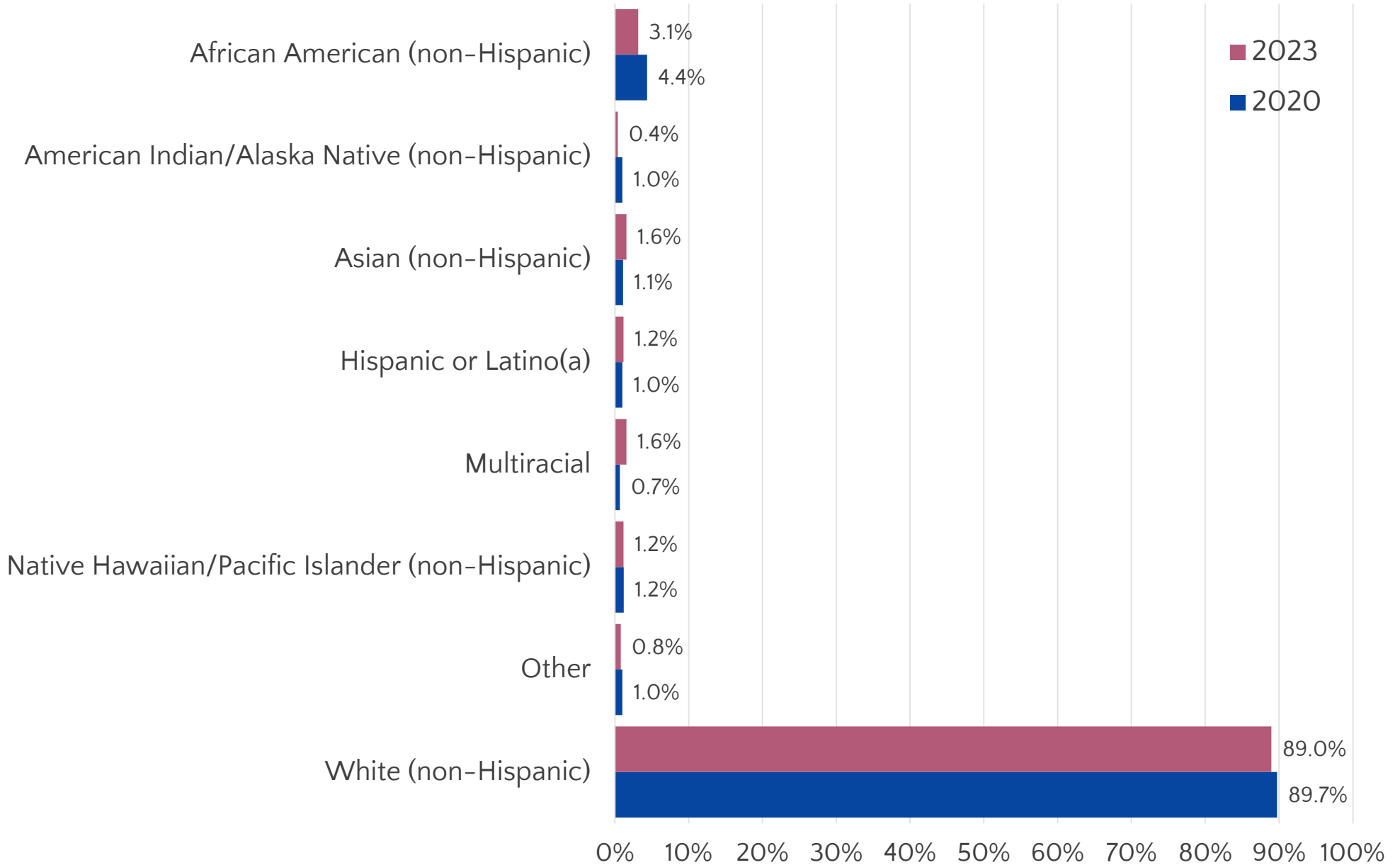
Clergy Characteristics, Fit, and
Well-Being

Leadership: Senior/Solo Clergy Characteristics

- Age
 - Average: 57.0
 - Median: 59.0
- Employment status:
 - Full-Time: 55.2%
 - Part-Time: 44.8%
- Compensation:
 - Paid: 98.9%
 - Unpaid: 1.1%
- Median first year of service:
 - 2015
- Part Time Clergy: Average hours worked in congregation:
 - 21.4

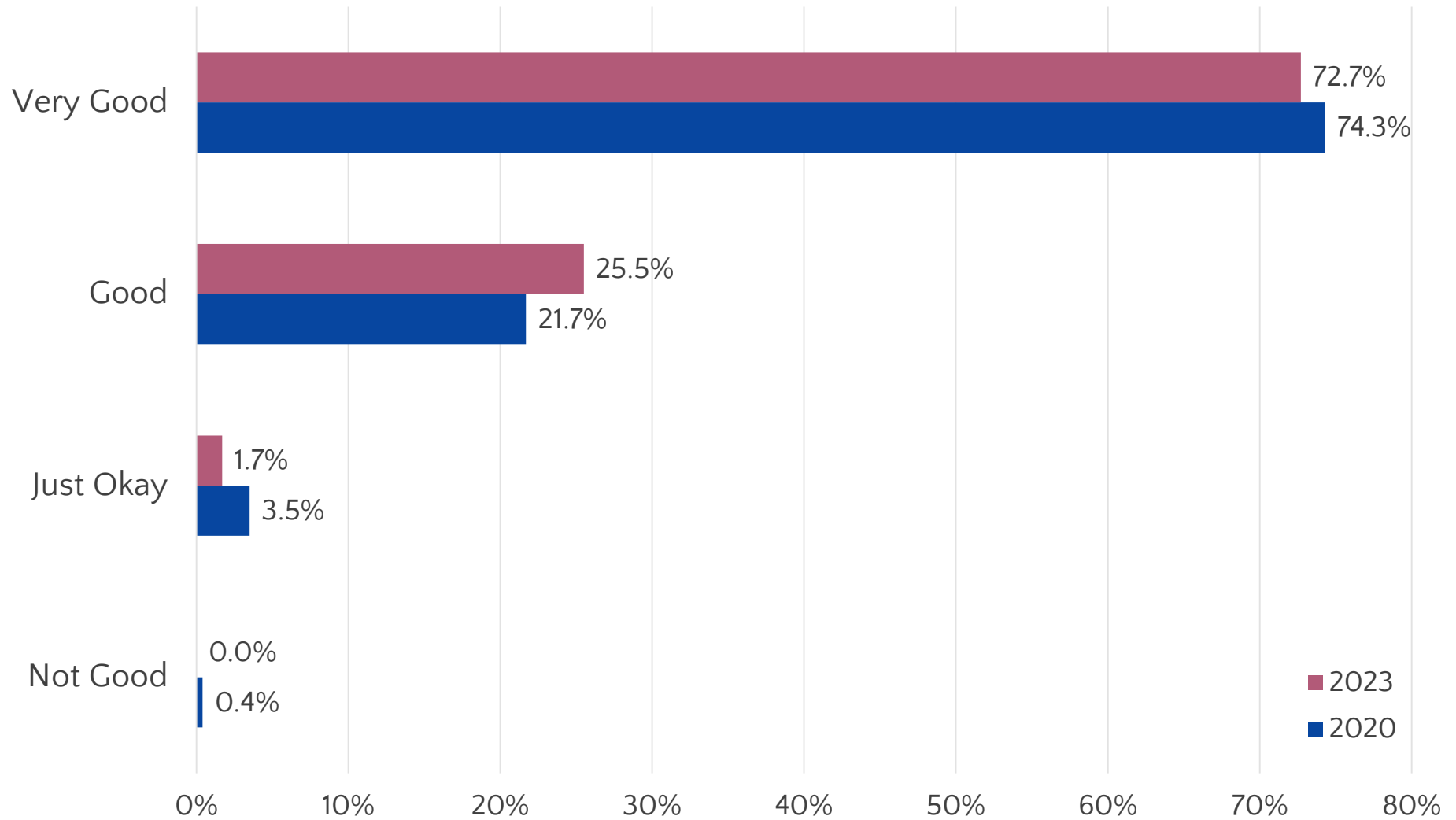


Leadership: Senior/Solo Clergy Race and Ethnicity



*Note: respondents could select more than one Race/Ethnicity

Leadership: “Fit” Between Leader and Congregation

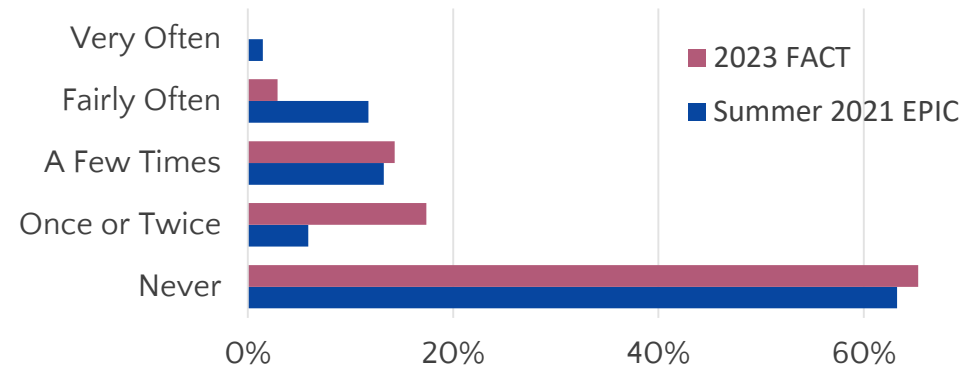


Leadership: Health and Challenges

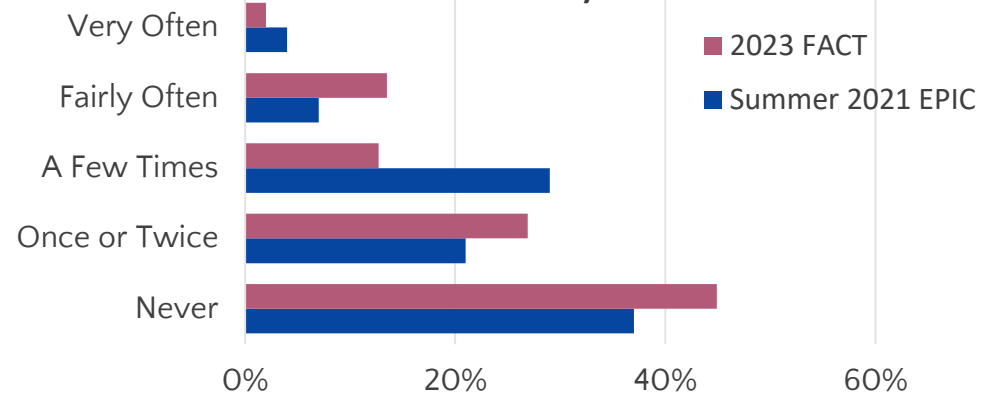
In general, How Would You Rate Your...

- Physical Health:
 - 7.3/10
- Mental Health:
 - 7.6/10
- Spiritual Health:
 - 7.7/10
- Relational Health (i.e., Your Relationships with Other People):
 - 7.9/10
- Financial Health:
 - 7.2/10

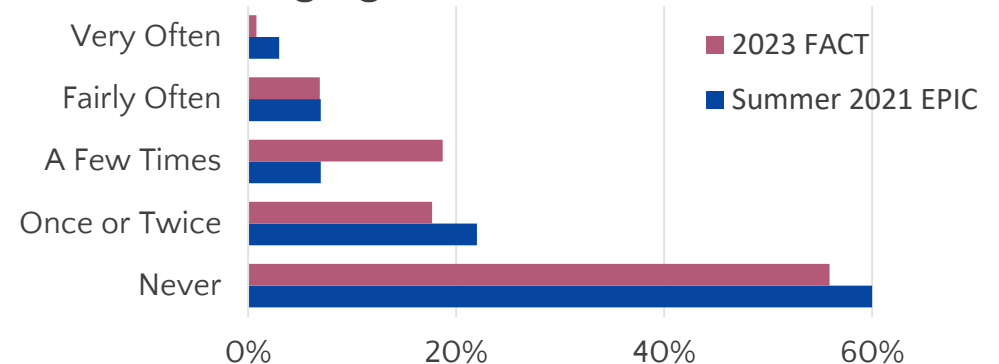
Since the start of 2020, how often have you:
Doubted that you are called by God for ministry



Seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry



Seriously considered leaving this congregation for another one





Church Activities

Attendance, Demographics, and
Programming

Activities: Worship

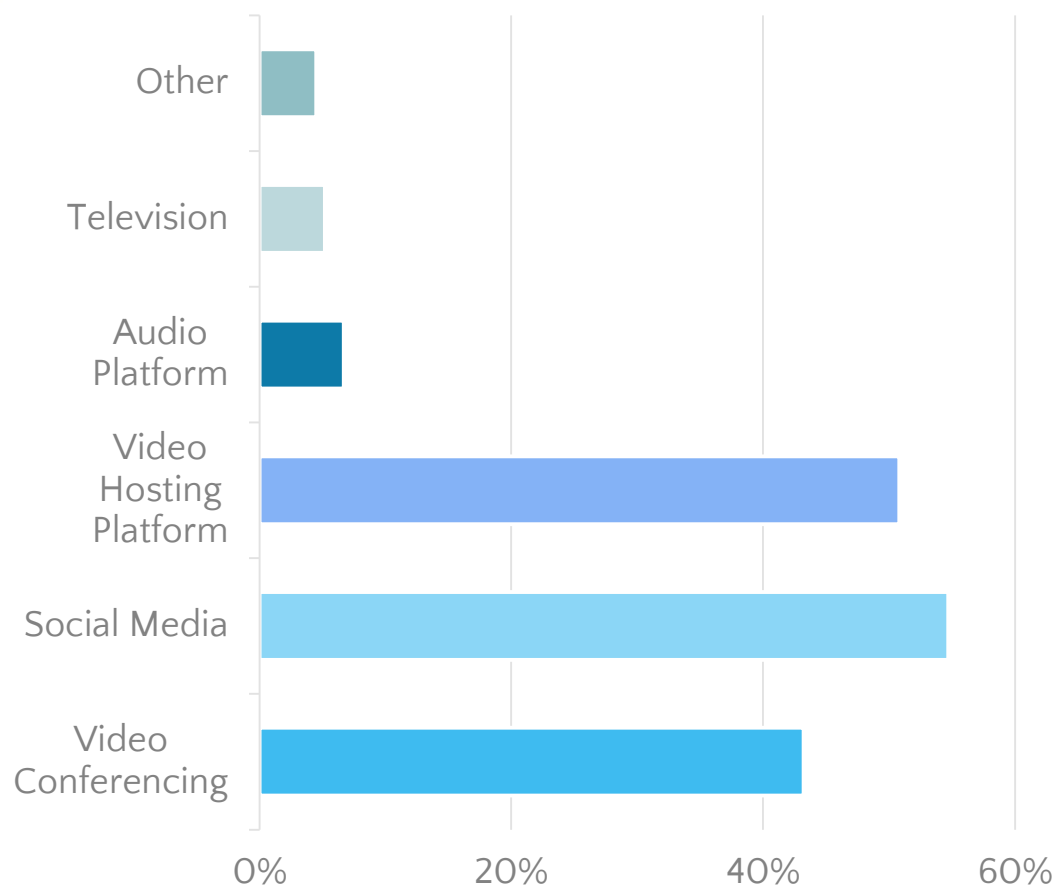
Average In-Person Attendance

- 2023: 47.9
- 2020: 67.1
- 2018 (2023 Estimate): 65.5
- 2015 (2020 Estimate): 77.4

Percent Offering Virtual Worship

- 2023: 85.8%
- 2020: 38.2% (live streaming)

Platforms Used, 2023



Activities: Participant Characteristics

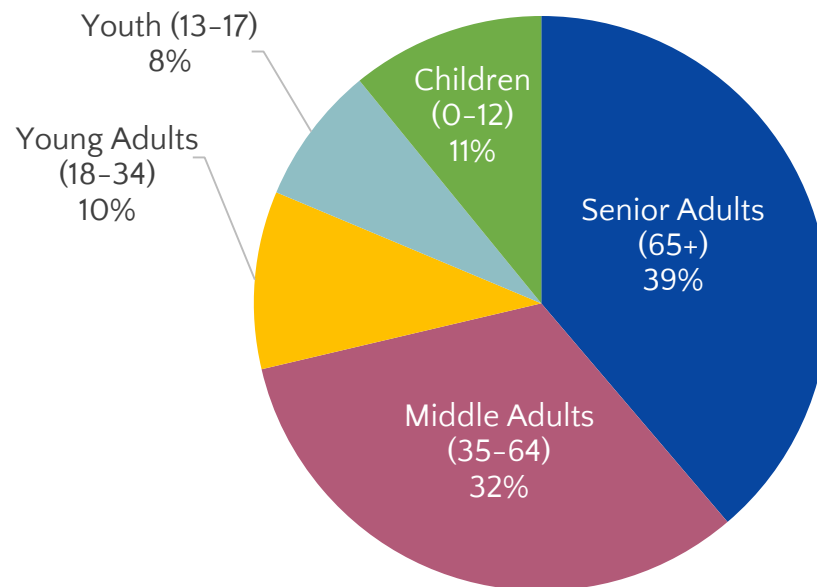
2020

- Number of Regular Participants: 98.2
- Percent Female: 62.3%
- Percent Volunteering Regularly at the Congregation: 53.5%
- Are New to the Congregation in Last Five Years: 16.7%

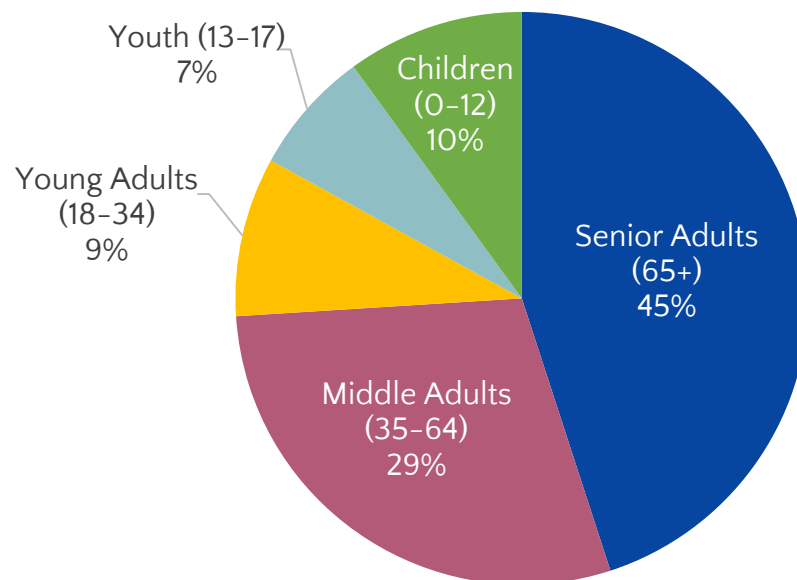
2023

- Number of Regular Participants: 68.0
- Percent Female: 62.7%
- Percent Volunteering Regularly at the Congregation: 45.0%
- Are New to the Congregation in Last Five Years: 11.5%

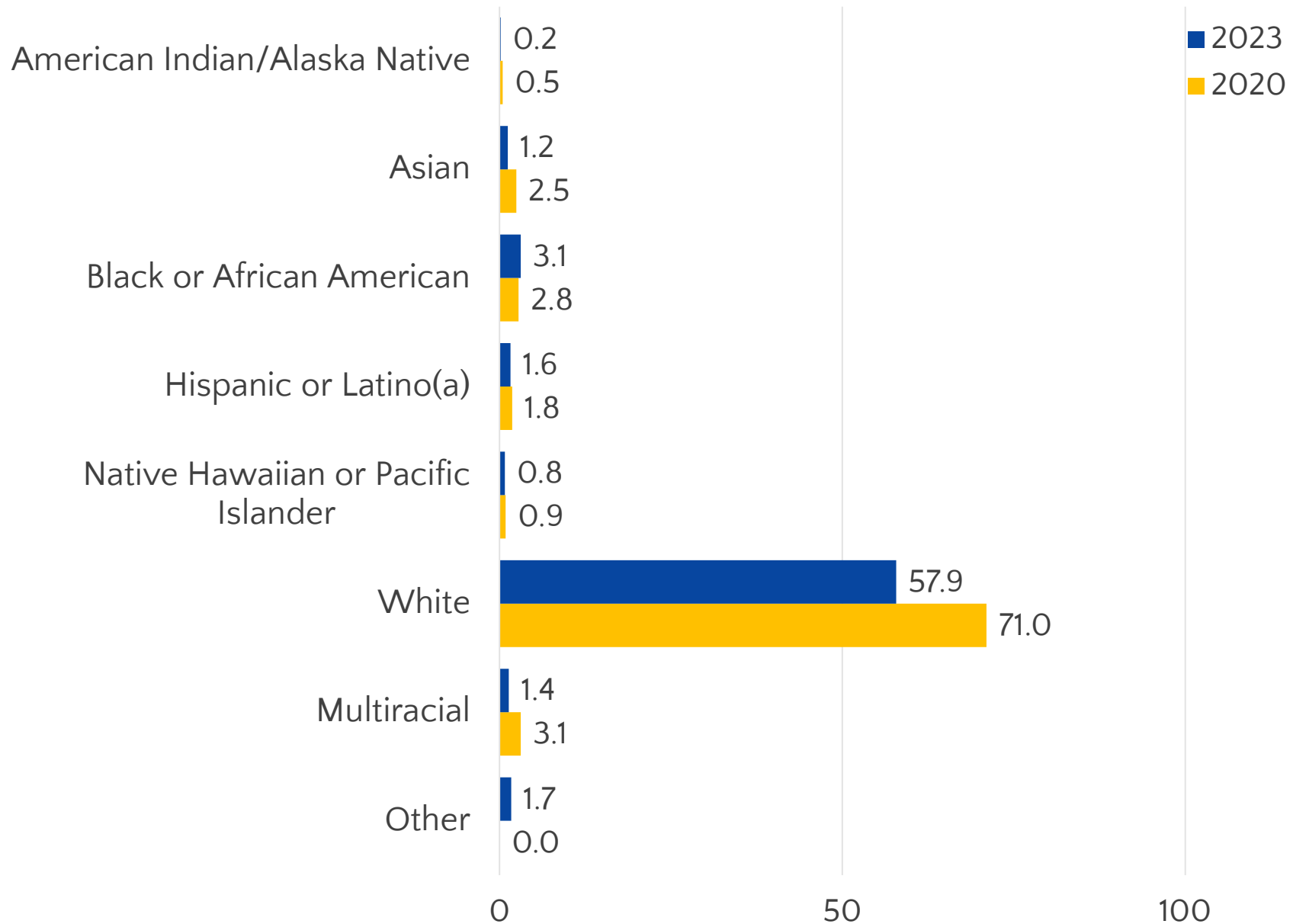
Average Regular Participants, 2020



Average Regular Participants, 2023



Mean Regular Participants: Race and Ethnicity



Activities: Programs Offered

	2020		2023				
	No	Yes (a lot or a little)	No	Yes, In-Person	Yes, Online	Yes, Online and In-Person	Yes, Any
Prayer or Meditation Groups	36.6%	63.4%	47.5%	25.3%	14.0%	13.2%	52.5%
Religious Education for Children	24.7%	75.3%	32.6%	62.9%	1.5%	3.0%	67.4%
Religious Education for Adults	17.7%	82.3%	17.7%	49.2%	11.3%	21.8%	82.3%
Youth (13-17) activities or programs	52.7%	47.3%	51.9%	45.2%	0.9%	2.0%	48.1%
Young adult (18-34) activities or programs	74.5%	25.5%	78.2%	19.0%	1.8%	1.0%	21.8%
Senior (65+) activities or programs	48.5%	51.5%	49.0%	44.2%	2.3%	4.5%	51.0%

Activities: Programs Offered

	2020		2023				
	No	Yes (a lot or a little)	No	Yes, In-Person	Yes, Online	Yes, Online and In-Person	Yes, Any
Social justice/advocacy groups	50.8%	49.2%	60.9%	24.4%	3.4%	11.2%	39.1%
Preschool and/or daycare center	82.8%	17.2%	77.5%	21.5%	1.0%	0.0%	22.5%
Fellowship/community -building events	N/A	N/A	7.7%	78.7%	2.2%	11.4%	92.3%
School (Primary or secondary)	N/A	N/A	97.1%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
Elementary School	92.3%	7.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
High School	94.8%	5.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community service activities	9.3%	90.7%	25.5%	69.4%	2.9%	2.2%	74.5%
Prison ministry	N/A	N/A	95.1%	4.4%	0.5%	0.0%	4.9%



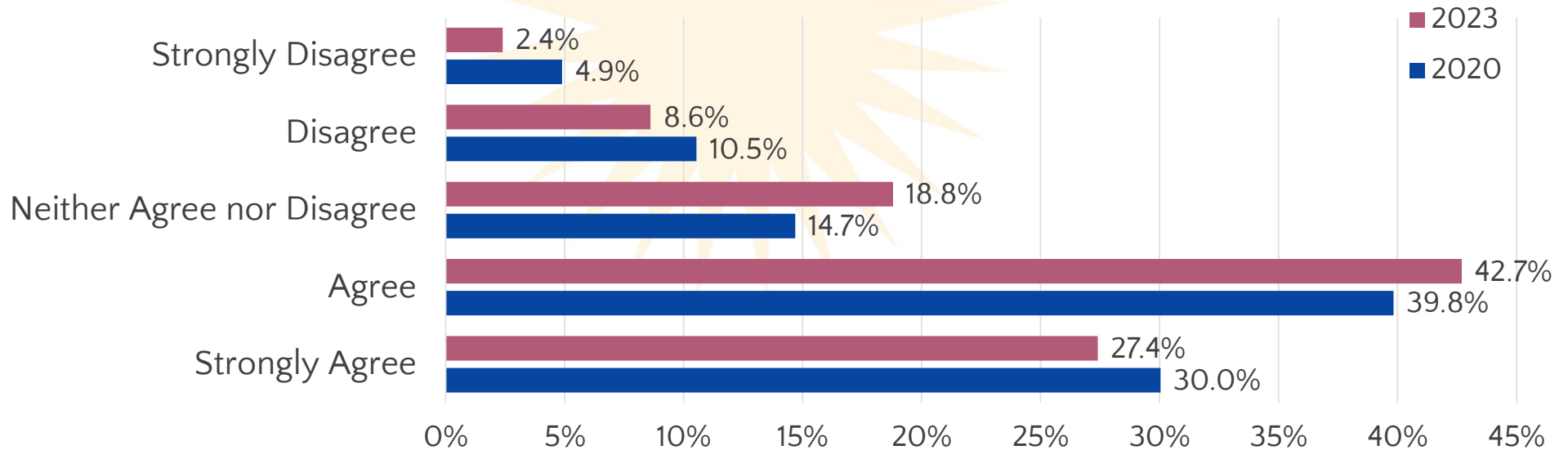
Mission and Identity

Purpose, Vitality, and Community
Involvement

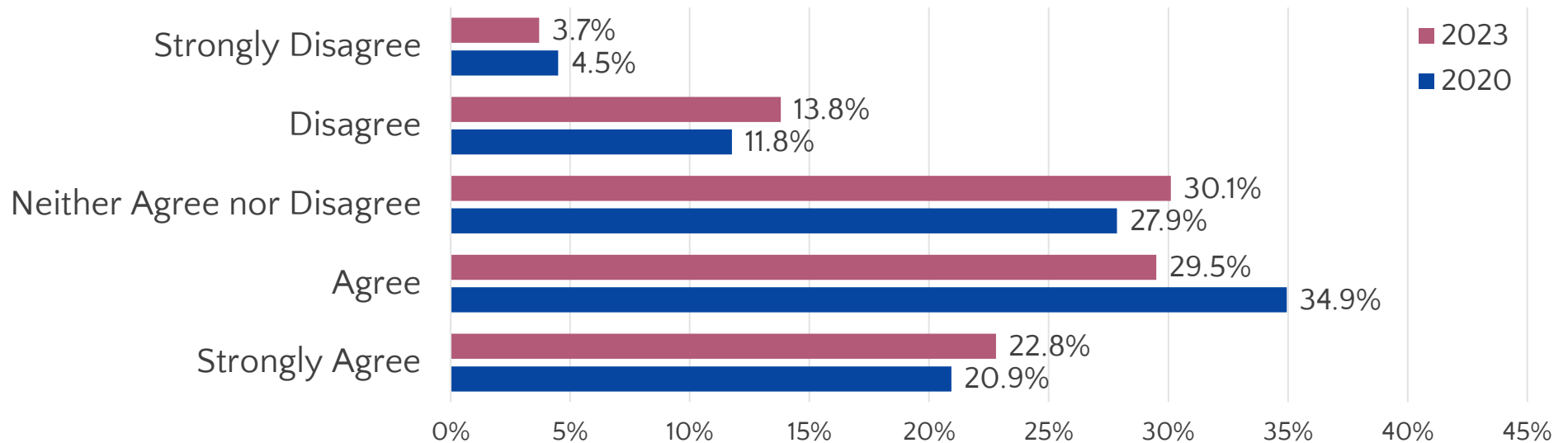
Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

Has a Clear Mission and Purpose



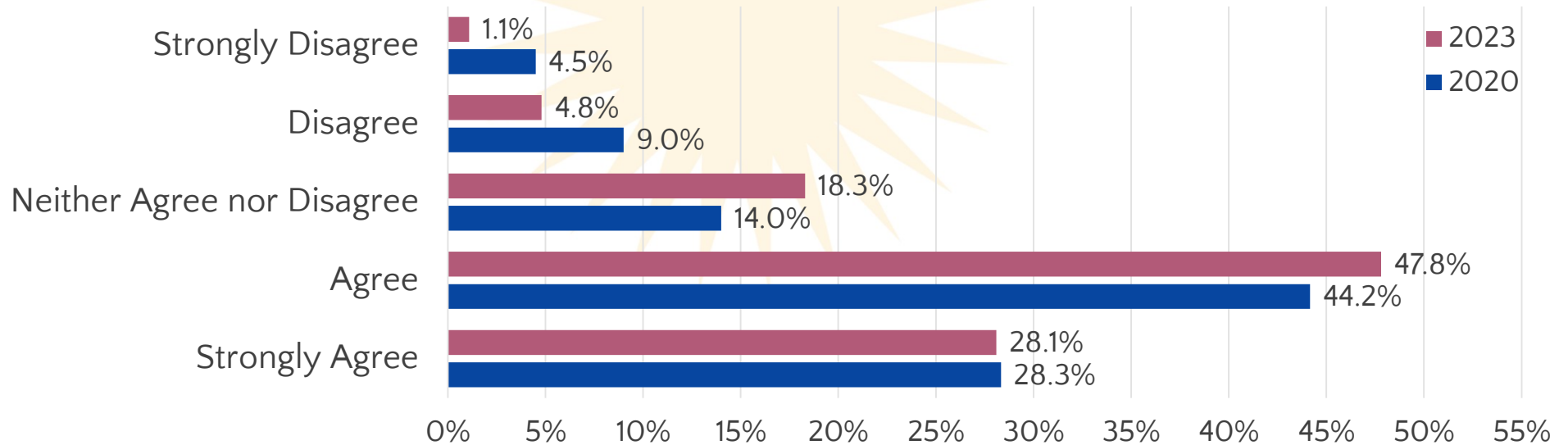
Is Striving to be Diverse



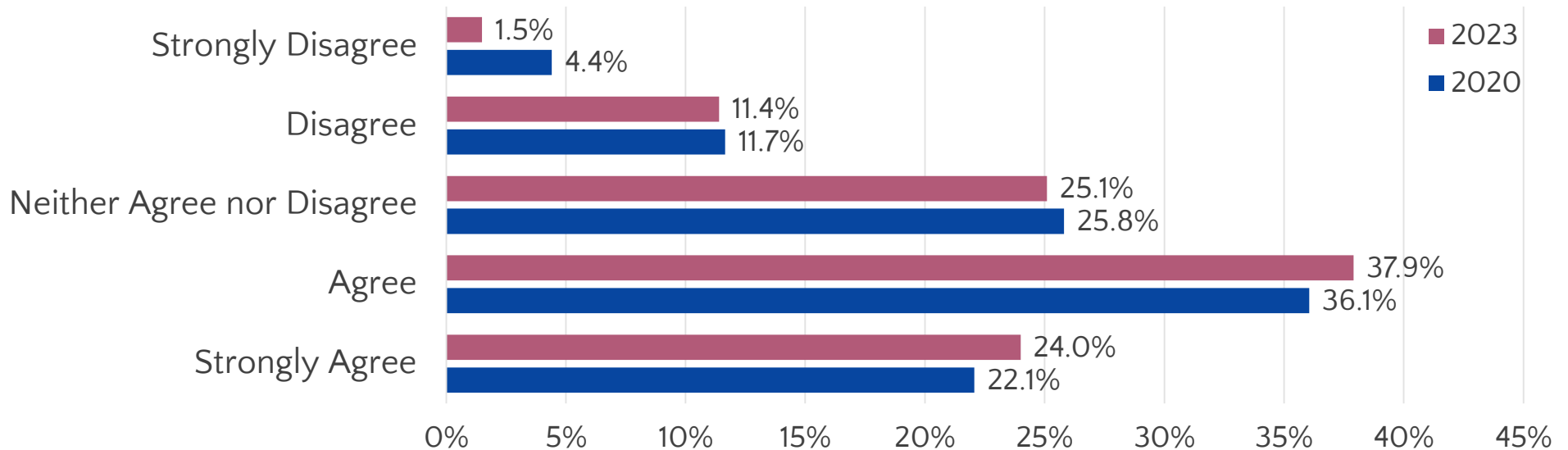
Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

Is Good at Incorporating New People into the Congregation



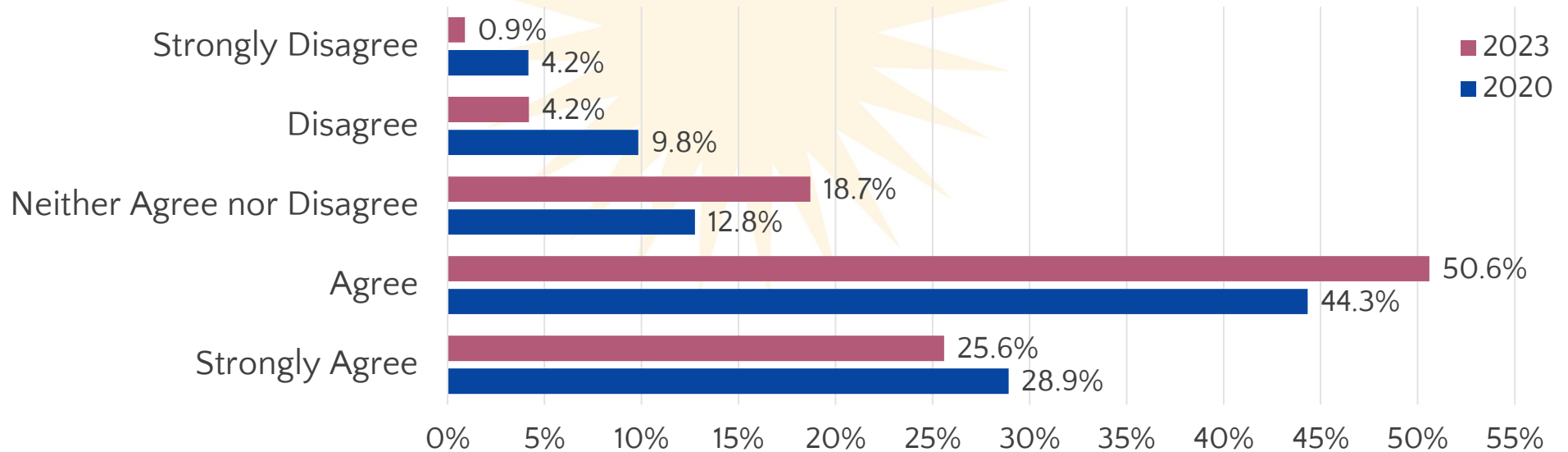
Is Actively Looking for New Members



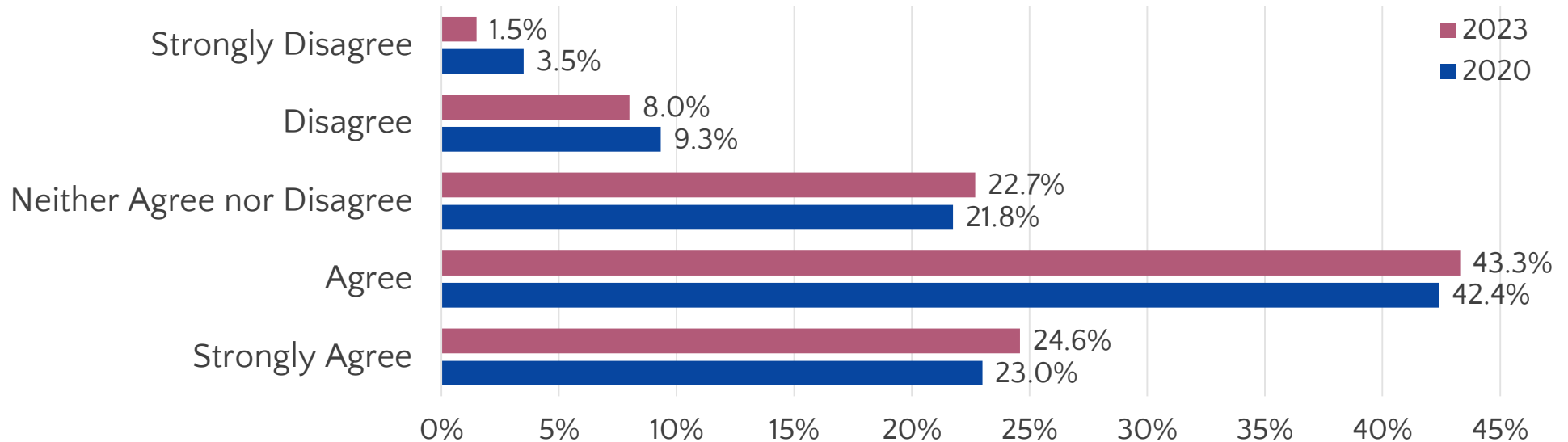
Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

Is Spiritually Vital and Alive



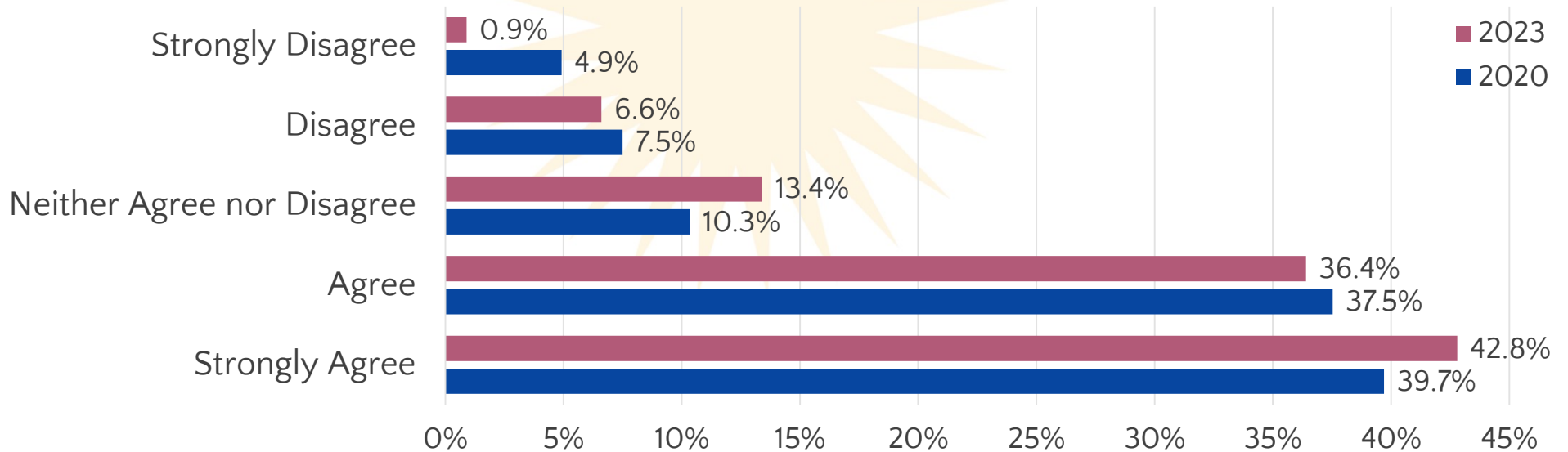
Is Willing to Change to Meet New Challenges



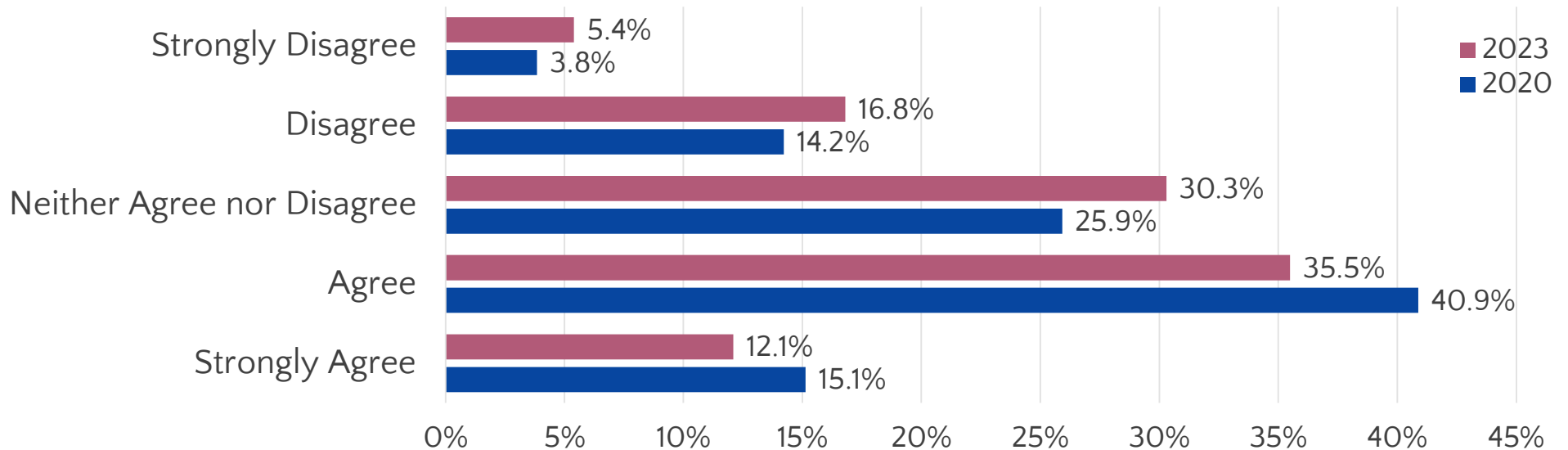
Mission and Identity

Our Congregation...

Is Actively Involved in Our Local Community



Participates Actively in the Wider UCC





Technology

Uses, Platforms, and Trends

Technology: Tools and Platforms

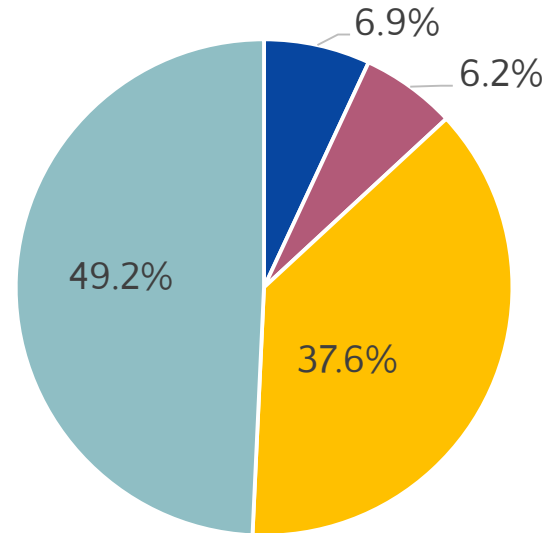
Frequency of Use:

- A few times a year
- Approximately monthly
- Approximately weekly
- Do not use

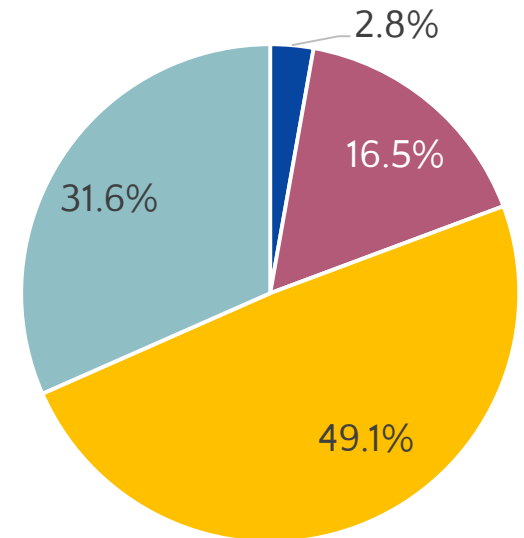
Percent New Since the Pandemic:

- Online Archiving: 14.9%
- Online Giving: 12.0%
- Email: 4.1%
- E-Newsletters: 6.5%

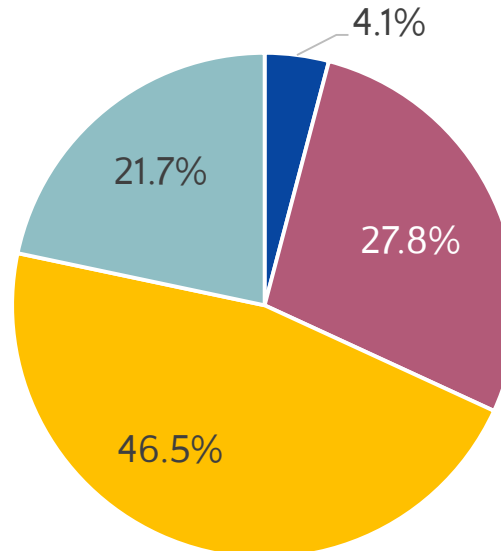
Online Archiving



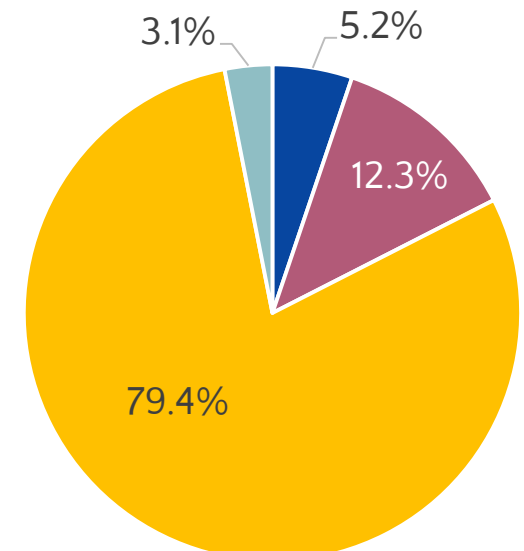
Online Giving



E-Newsletter



Email



Technology: Tools and Platforms

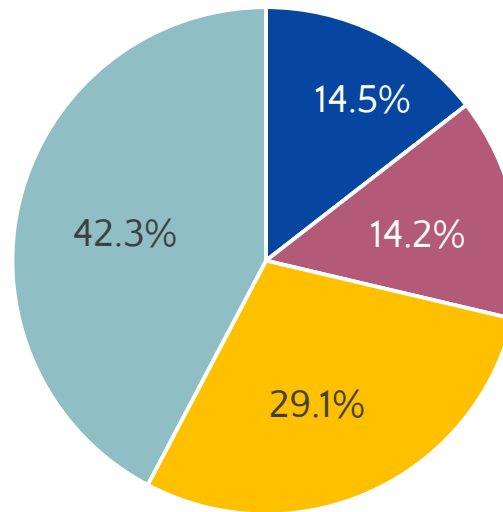
Frequency of Use:

- A few times a year
- Approximately monthly
- Approximately weekly
- Do not use

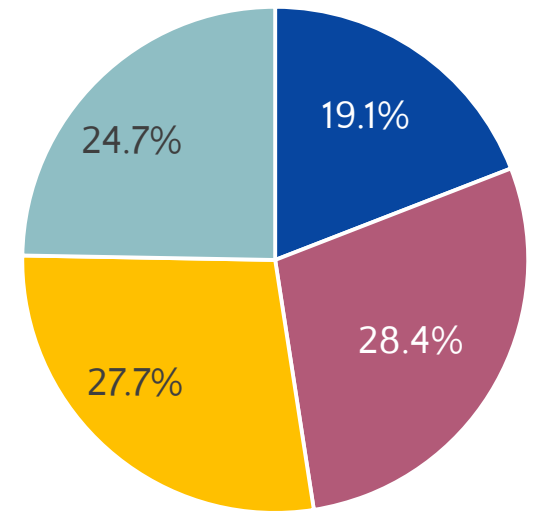
Percent New Since the Pandemic:

- Online Meetings, Small Groups: 29.4%
- Online Meetings, Administrative: 36.7%
- Social Media, Event Planning: 8.9%
- Social Media, Connection and Care: 10.5%

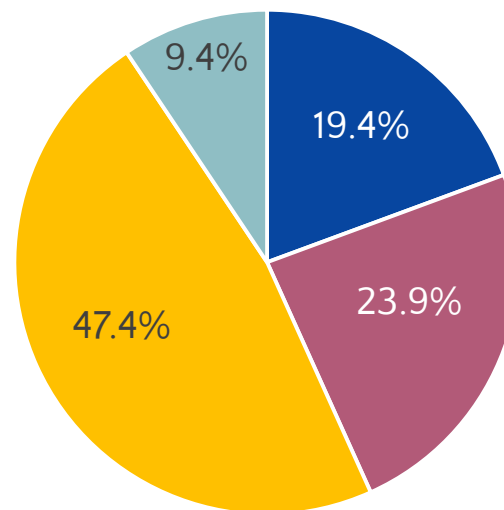
Online Meetings, Small Groups



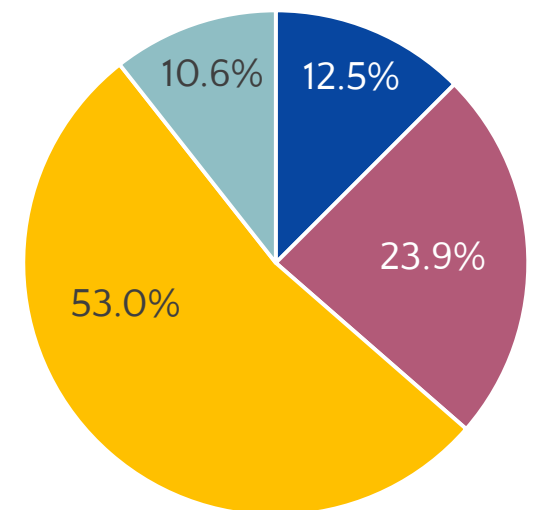
Online Meetings, Administrative



Social Media, Event Planning/Ads



Social Media, Connection and Care



Technology: Tools and Platforms

Average Percentage of Regular Monthly Giving Received Through Online Giving: 24.8%

Approximate Percentage of Participants Donating Online: 22.7%

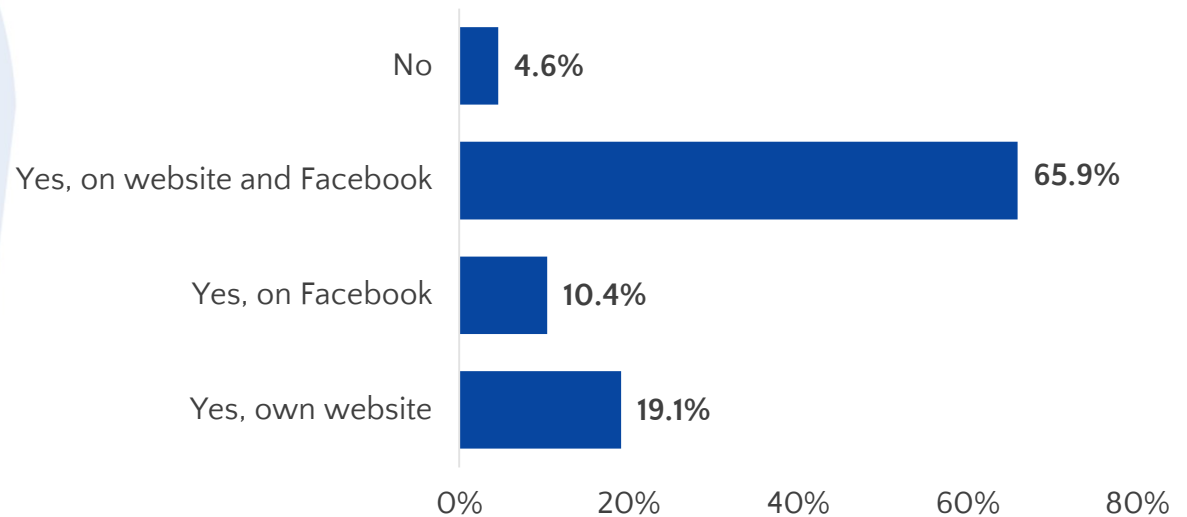
2020

- Percent with Wi-Fi Access: 79.7%
- Percent having Website: 82.0%

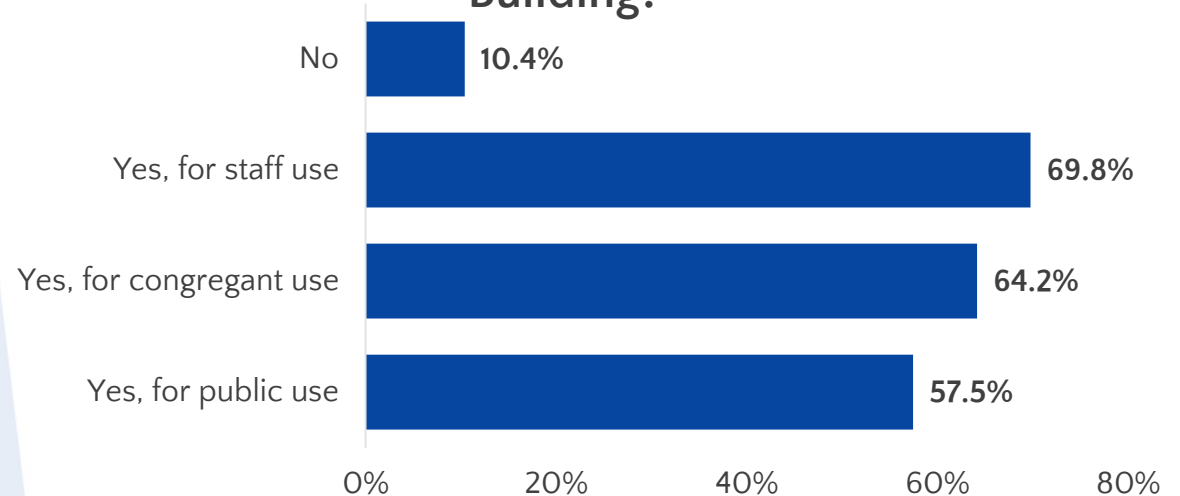
2023

- Percent with Wi-Fi Access: 89.6%
- Percent having Website: 85.0%

2023: Does Your Congregation Have a Web Presence?



2023: Do You Have Wi-Fi Access In Your Building?





Finances

Expenditures, Revenues, and Sense of
Financial Health

Finances: Revenues and Expenditures

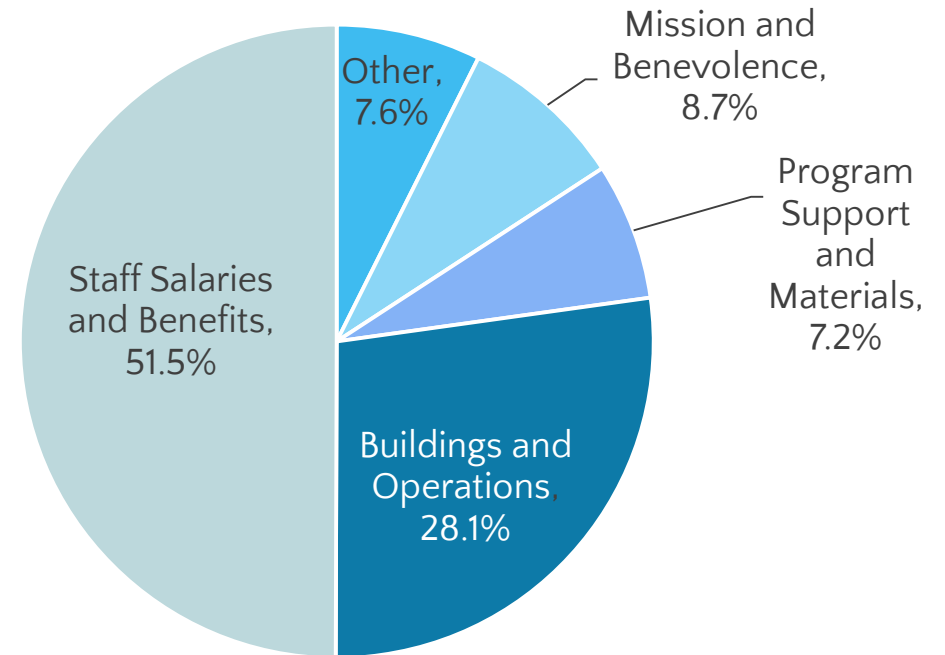
Average Total Revenues:

- 2020: \$323,442.91
- 2023: \$210,816.12

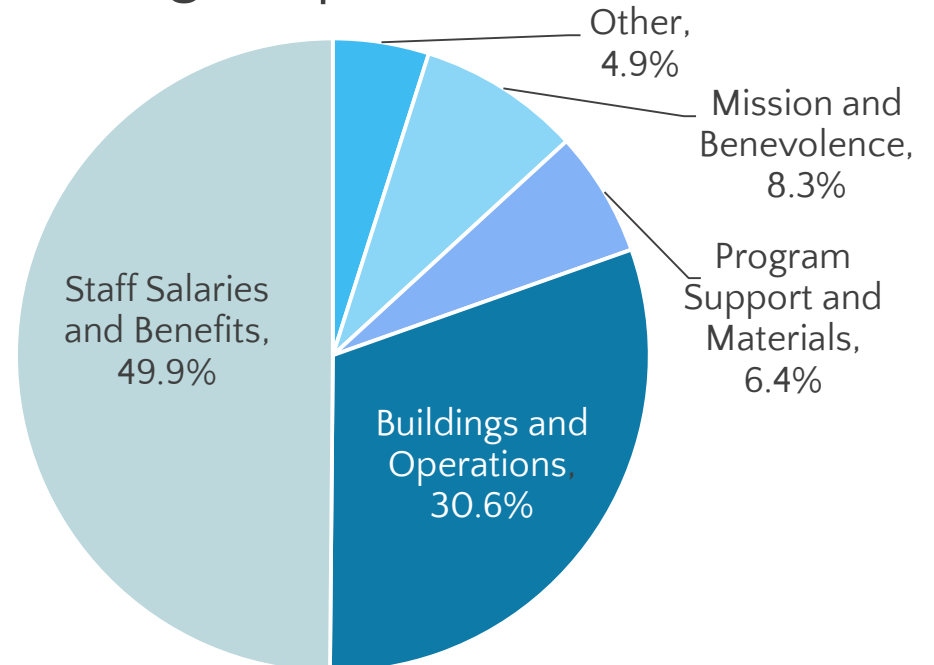
Average Total Expenditures:

- 2020: \$205,883.69
- 2023: \$241,006.46

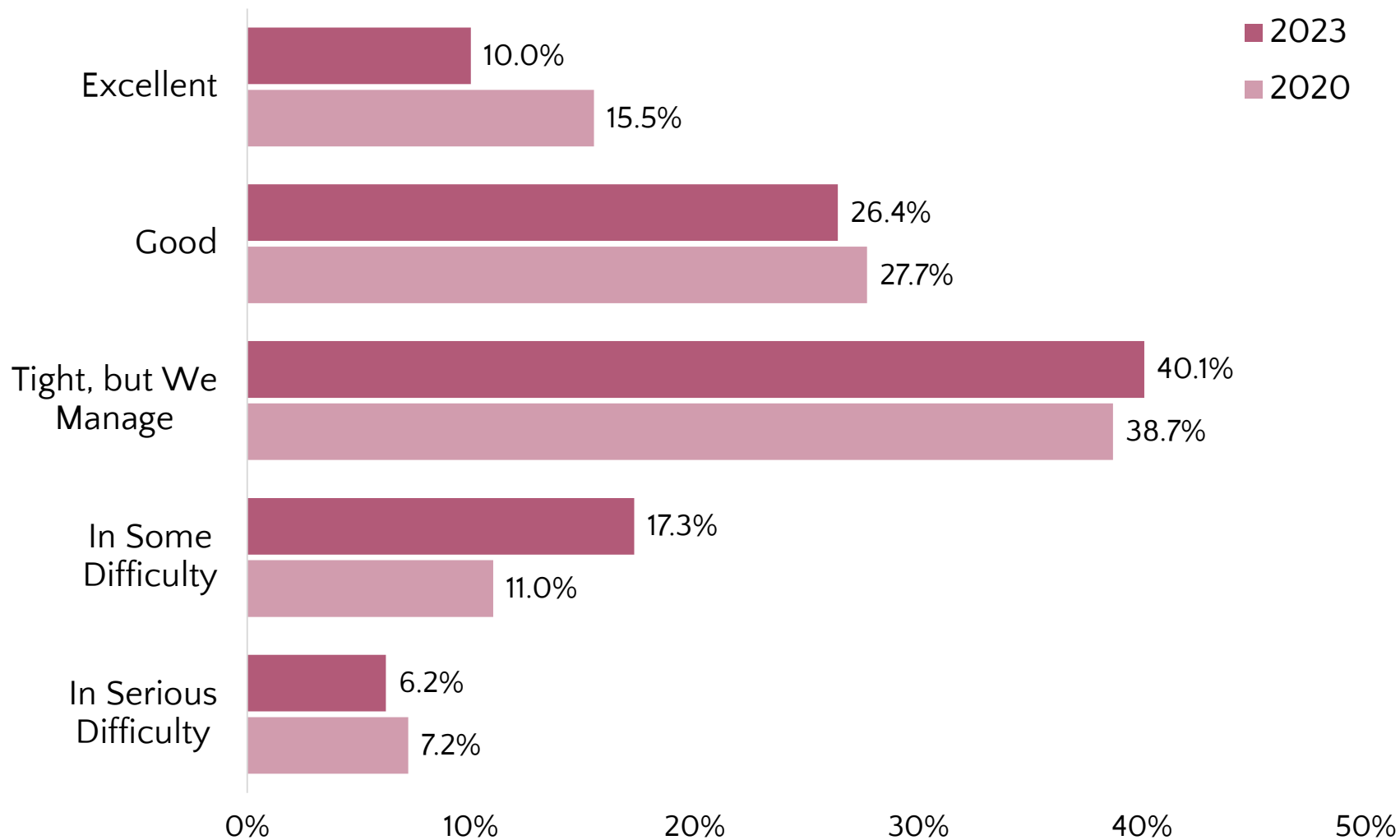
Average Expenditures 2020



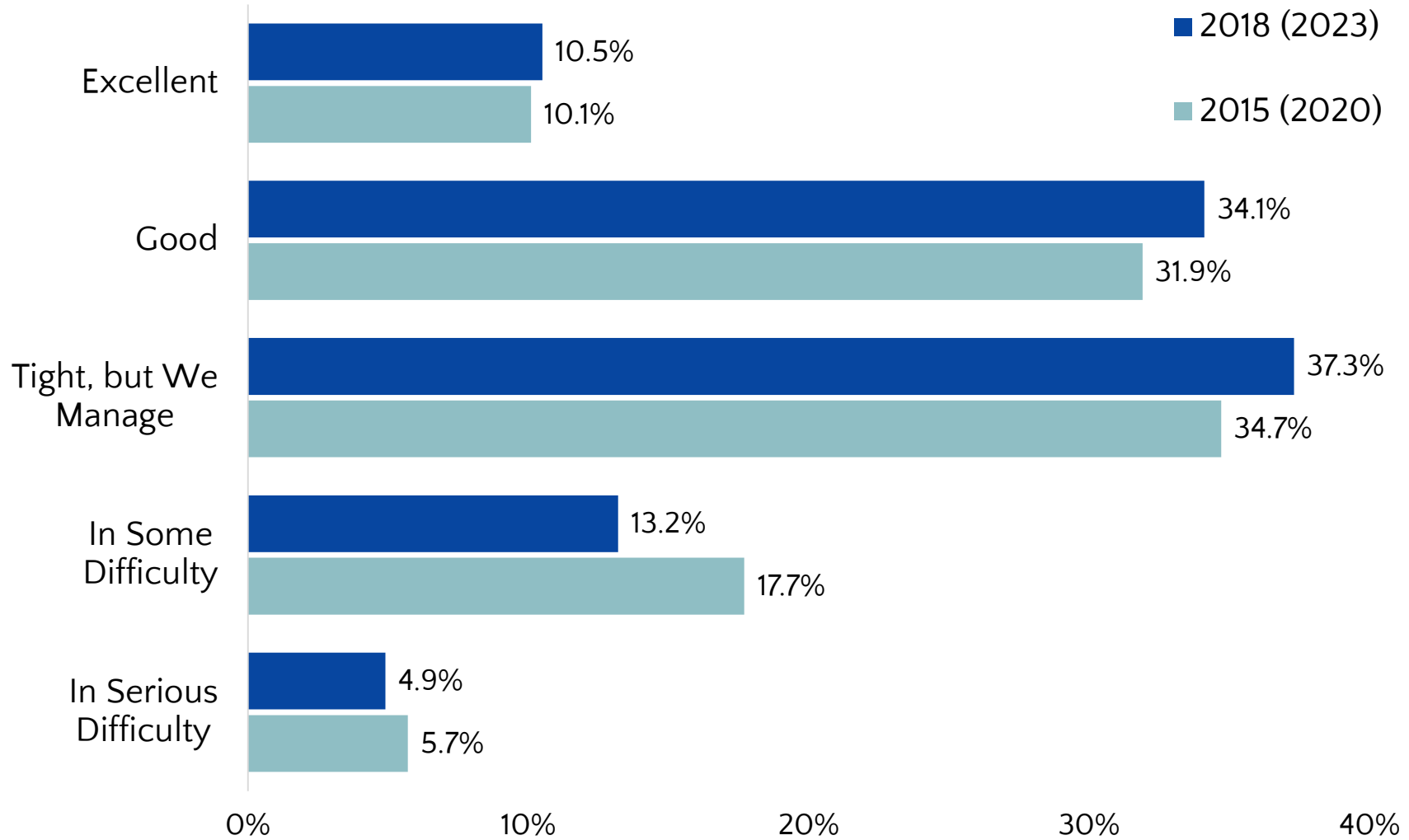
Average Expenditures 2023



How Would You Describe Your Congregation's Financial Health Today?



How Would You Describe Your Congregation's Financial Health Five Years Ago?





Pandemic Experiences

Challenges, Successes, and Future
Outlook

Pandemic Experiences: Concerns and Successes

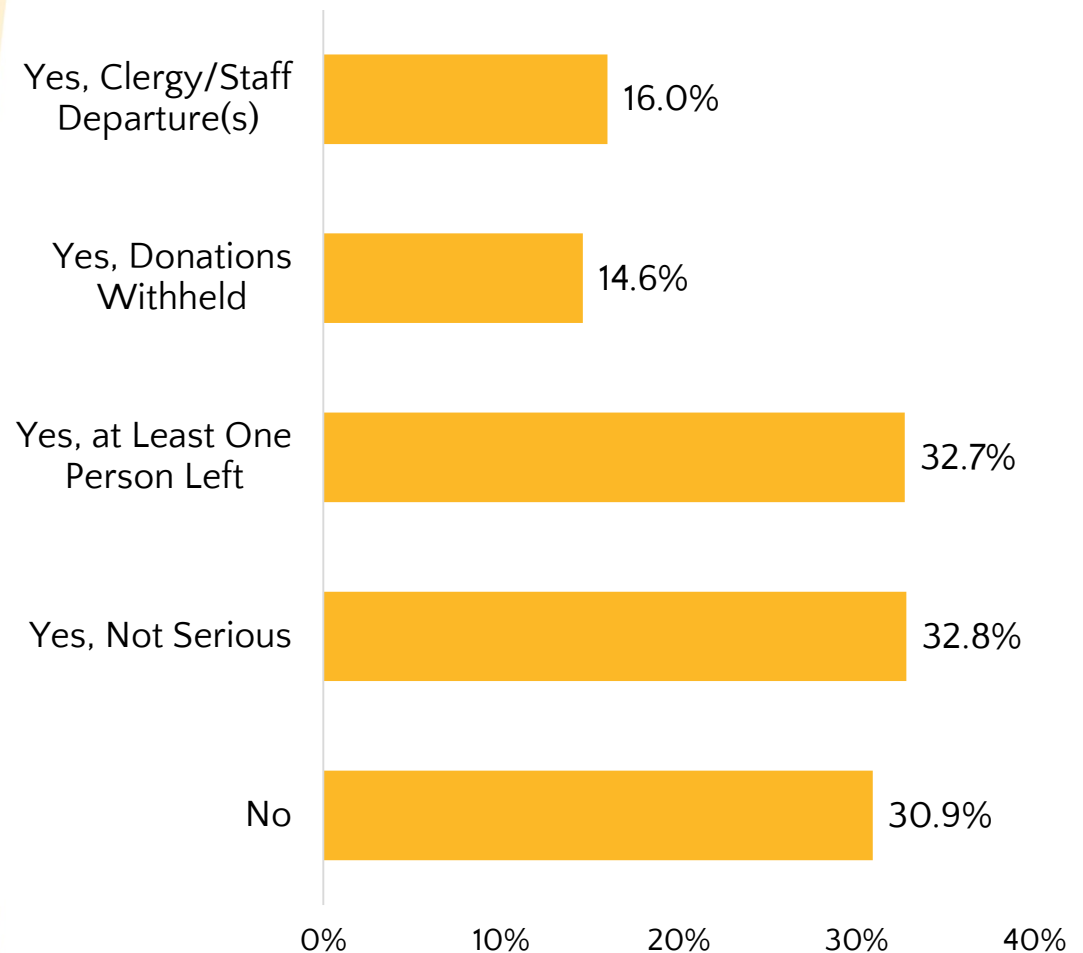
Most Frequently Named Concerns for Future

- 2020:
 - Membership/Attendance Levels
 - Finances
 - Aging Membership
- 2023:
 - Membership/Attendance Levels
 - Finances
 - Aging Membership

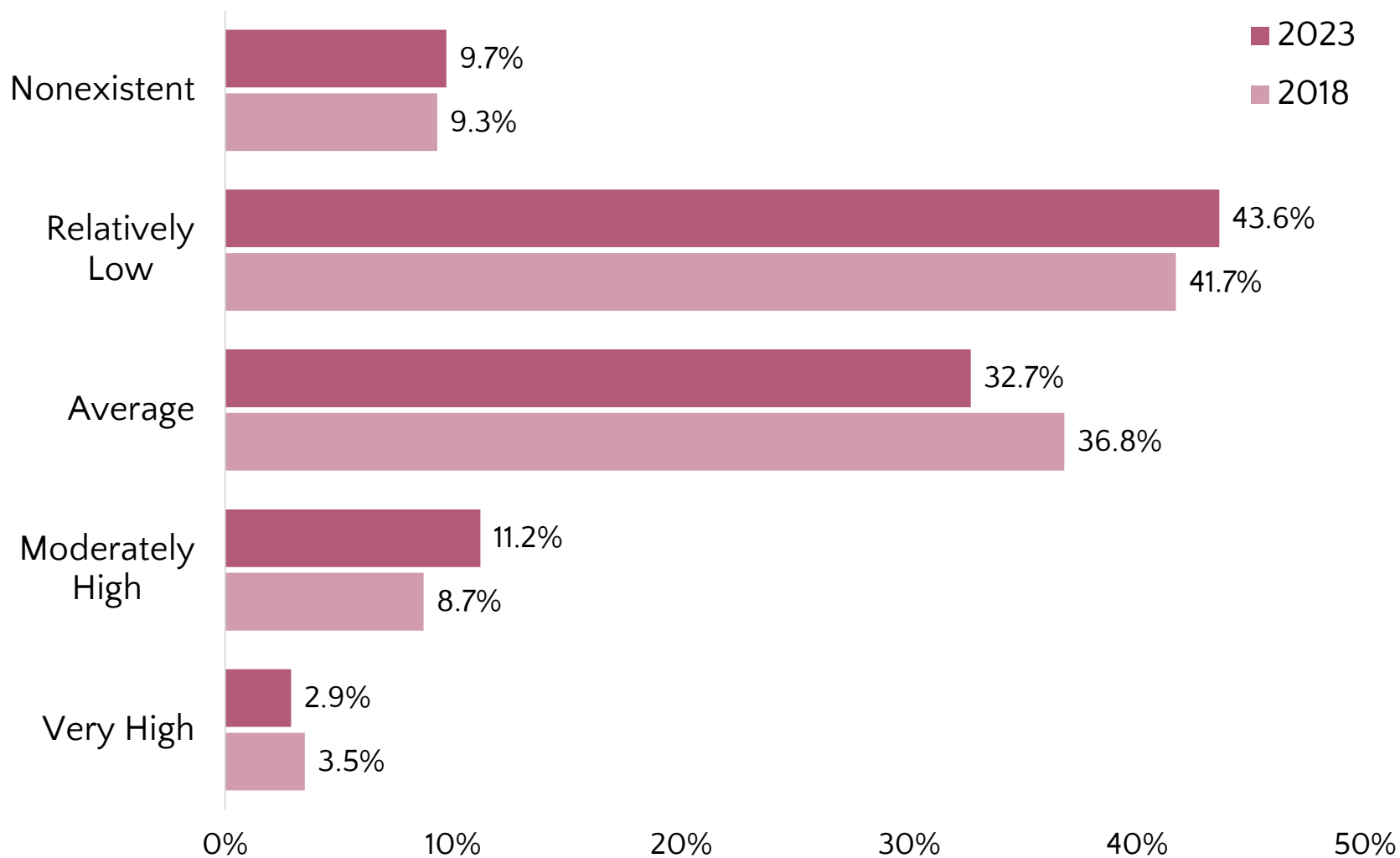
Most Frequent Points of Success

- 2020:
 - Openness, Welcoming Attitude
 - Fellowship, Mutual Support
 - Activity in and Impact in Community
- 2023:
 - Fellowship, Mutual Support
 - Openness, Welcoming Attitude
 - Activity in and Impact on Community

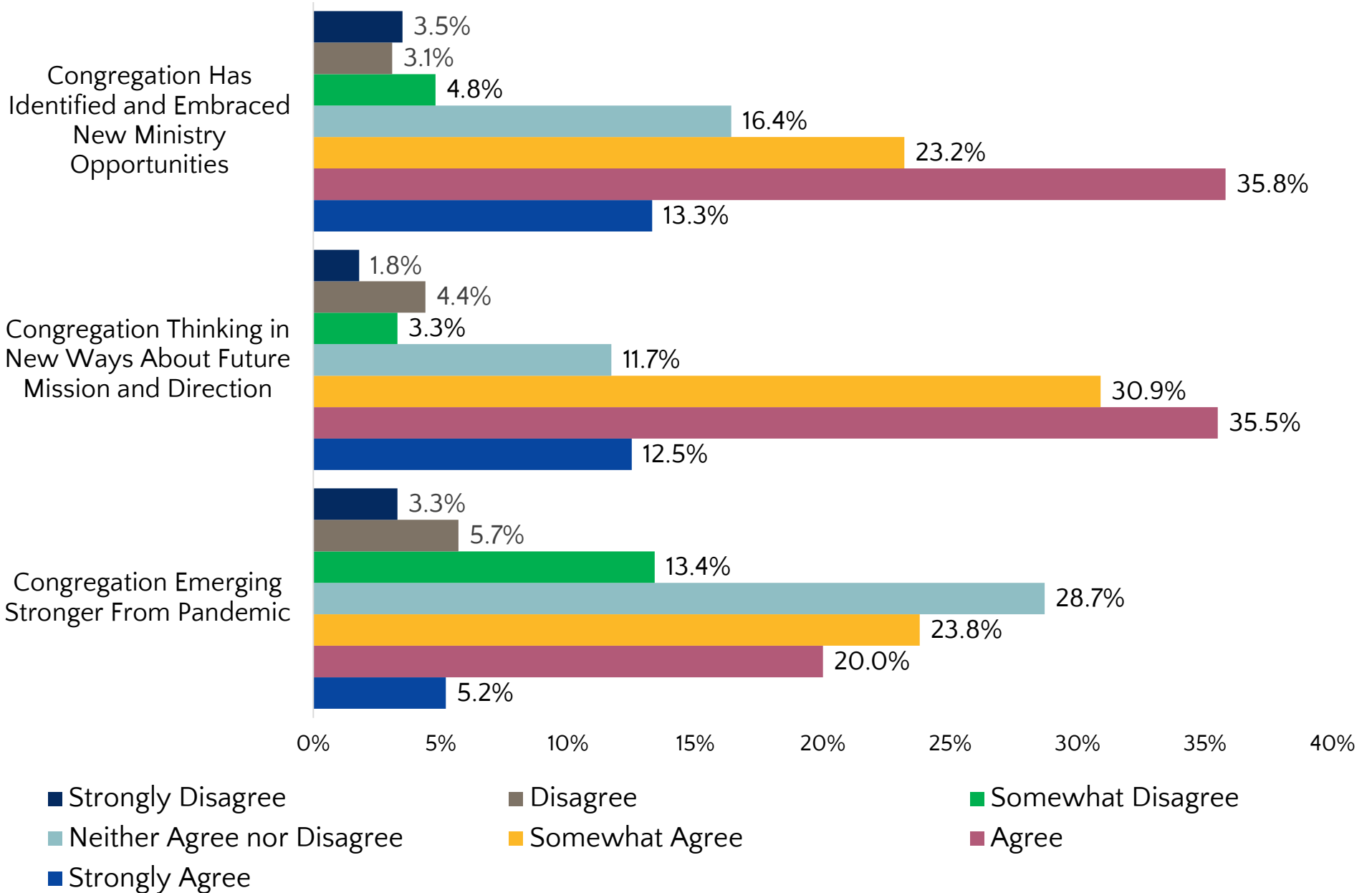
Since the Start of 2020, has Your Congregation Experienced any Disagreements?



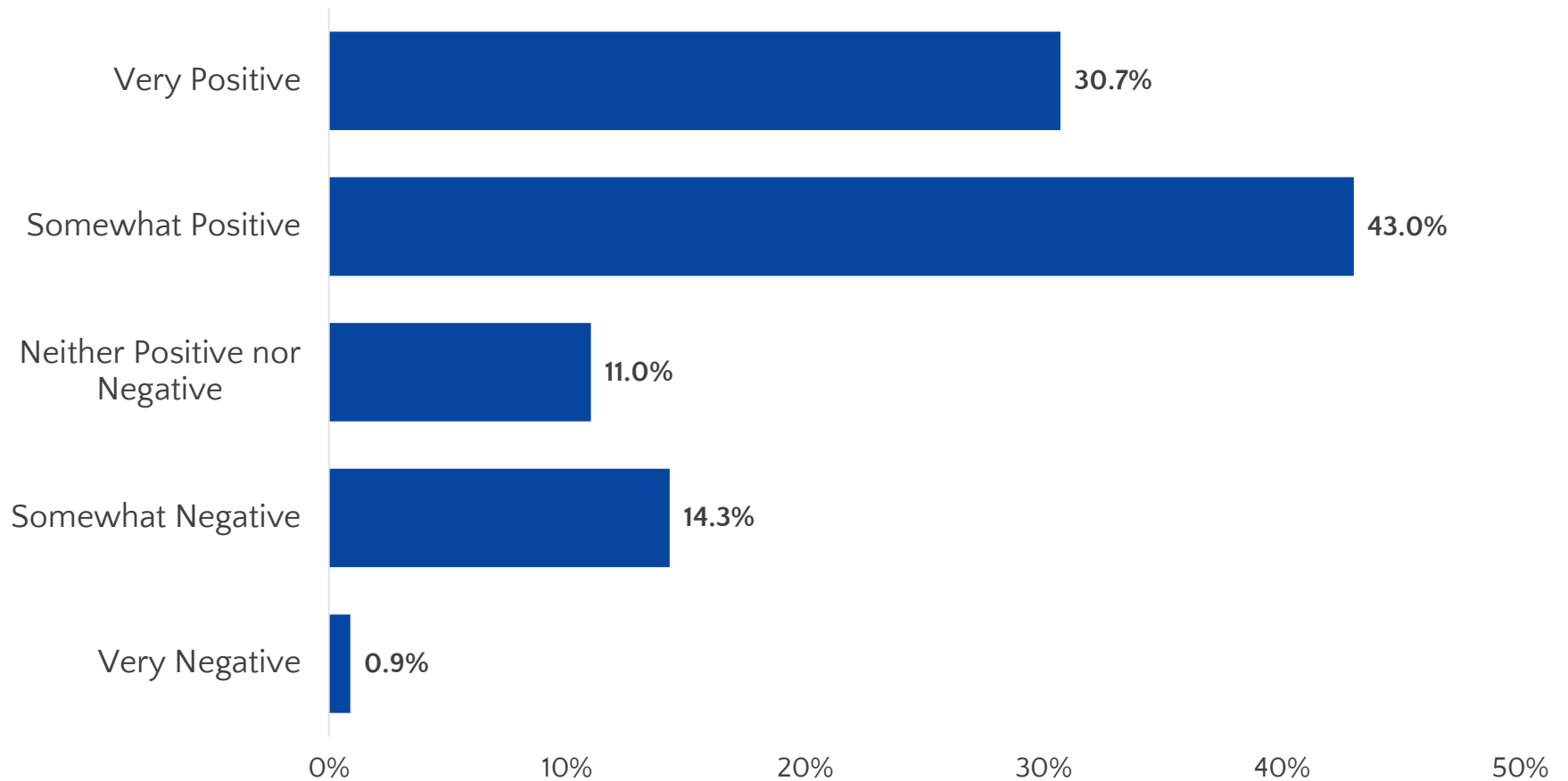
How Would You Rate the Level of Tension in Your Congregation Surrounding Social and Political Issues (Excluding COVID-19) Now Compared to 2018?



Changes Since Pandemic



What is Your Current Outlook on this Congregation's Future?



Additional Information and Resources

Faith Communities Today

- [Partners](#)
- [News](#)
- [2020 Report](#)

[Hartford Institute for Religion Research](#)

[The Association of Religion Data Archives](#) (The ARDA)