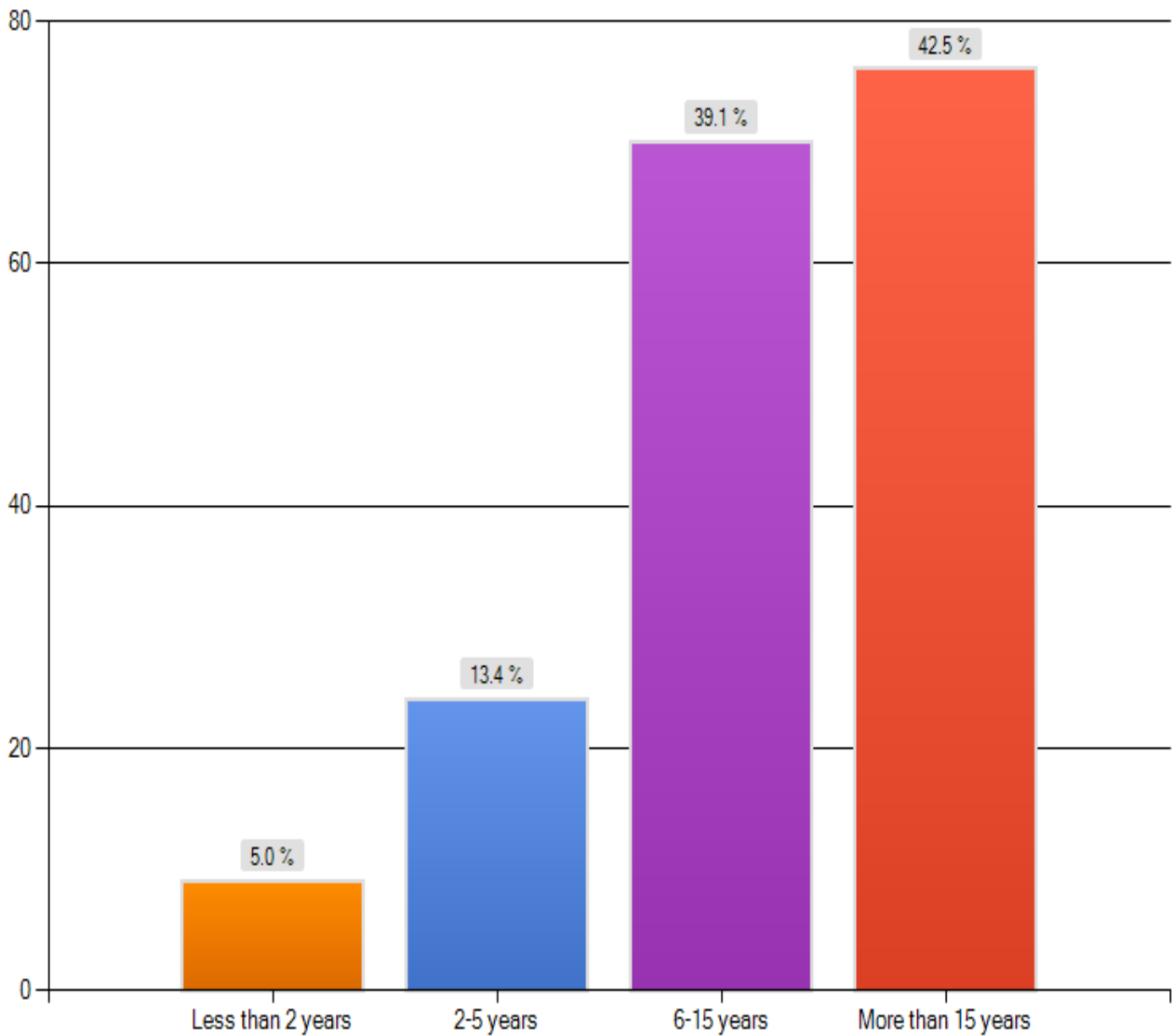


First Unitarian Church of Victoria
September 2009 Congregational Survey

The survey results are based on 180 responses to the survey carried out in September 2009. A large majority responded electronically directly using “survey monkey” with approximately 60 entries being received and entered centrally. Of the respondents, 92% are members of the congregation, others are friends; and seventy percent (70%) are female.

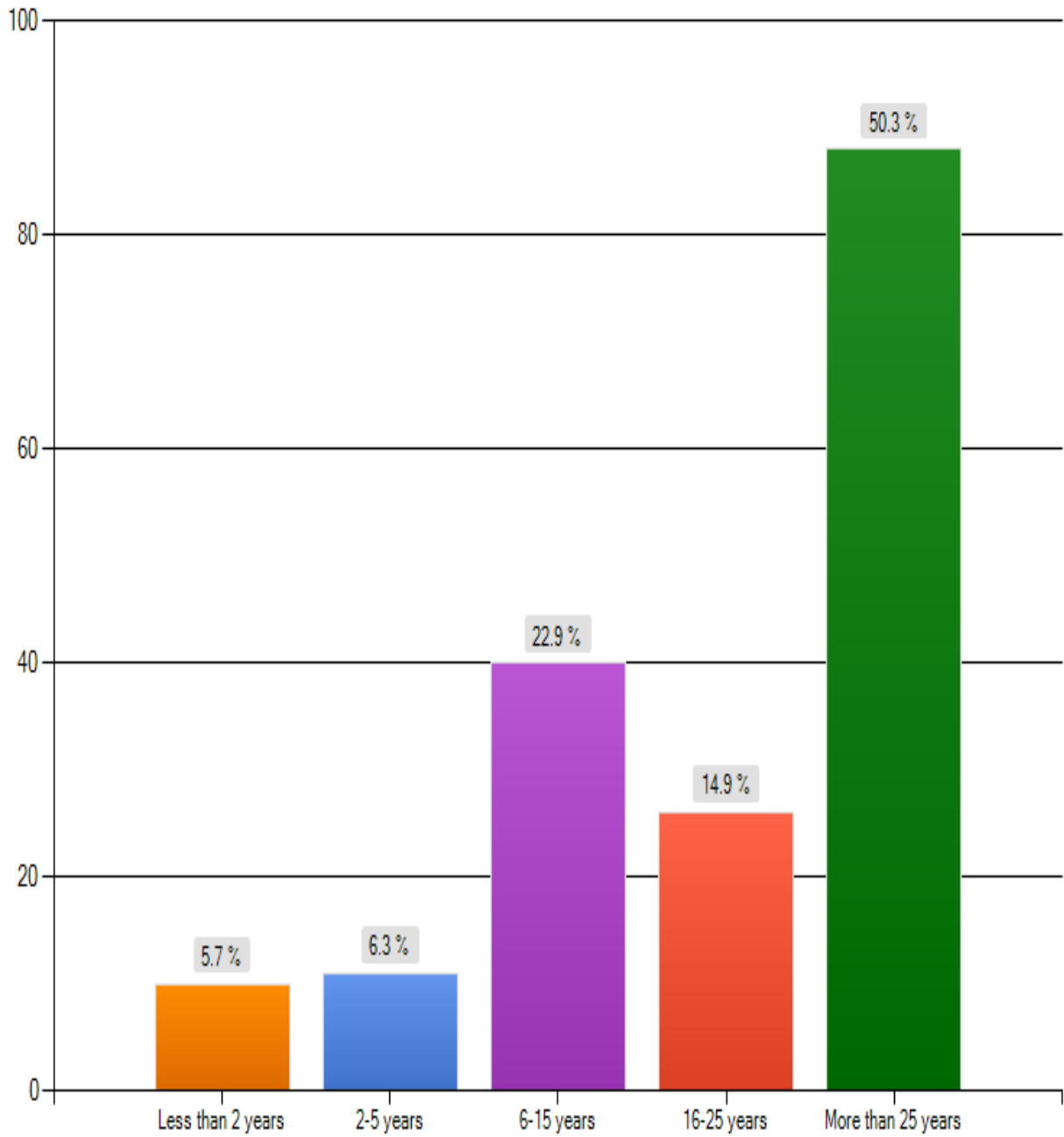
1. 42% have attended this congregation for more than 15 years.

How long have you attended this congregation?



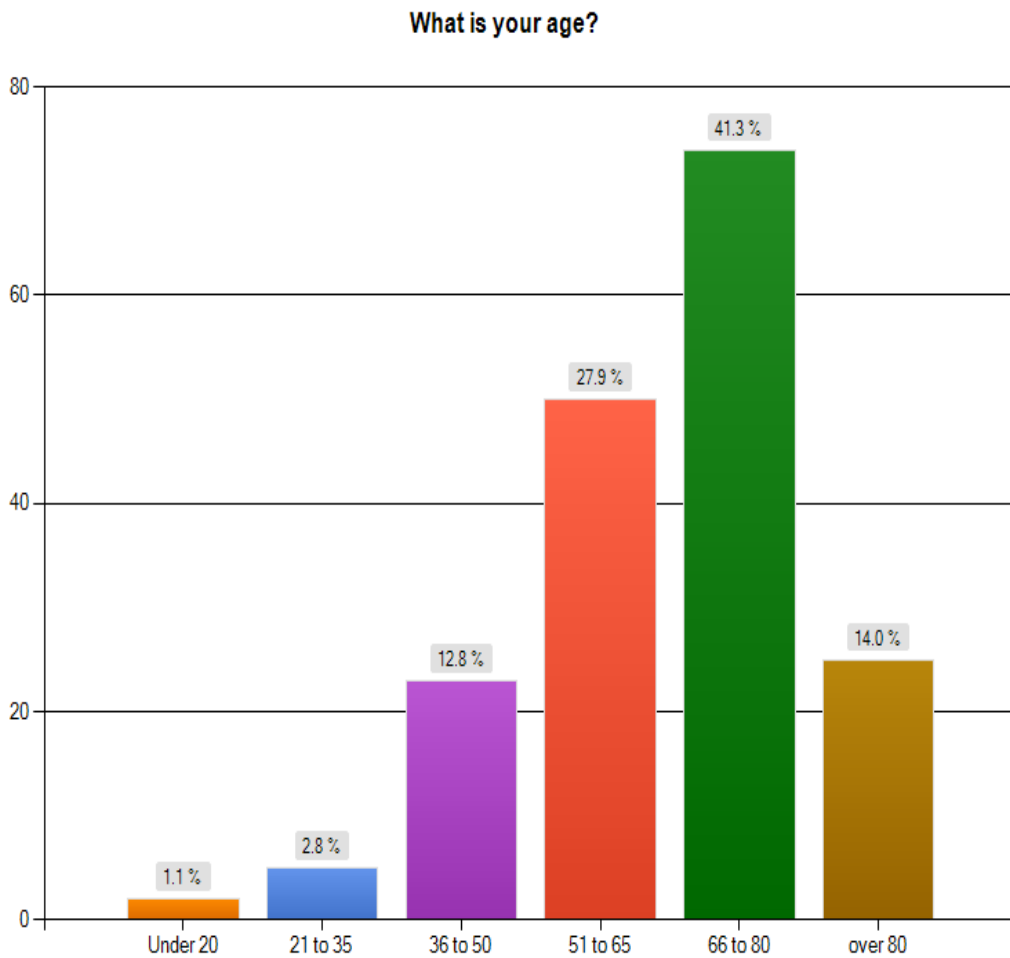
2. 50% have been Unitarians for more than 25 years.

How long have you been a Unitarian Universalist?



3. 92% of respondents were members of the congregation and 75% of respondents attend services twice a month or more. 70% are female.

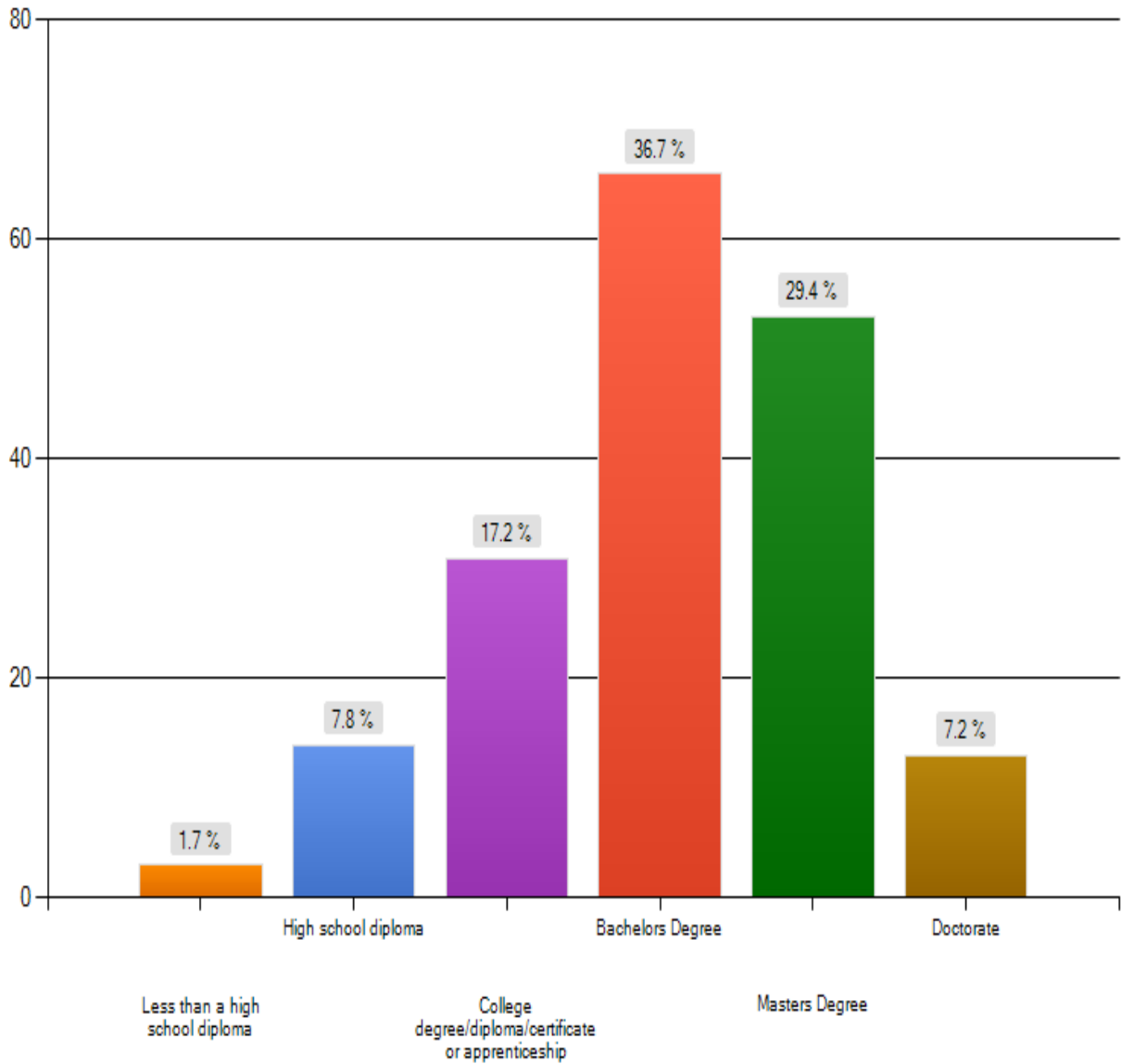
4. 55% are over the age of 65.



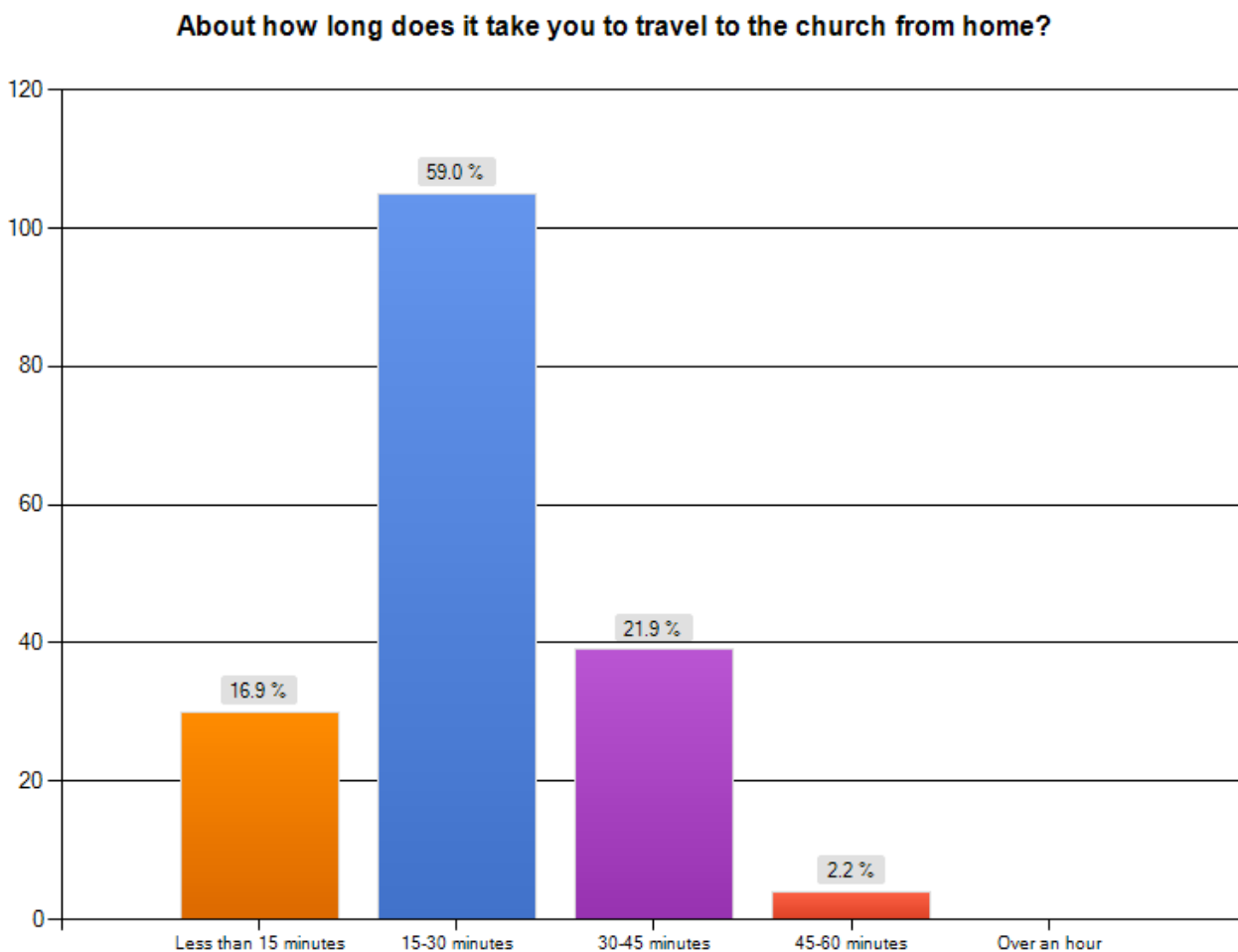
5. 95% are heterosexual

6. 74% have a University degree; of those over 50% have a Master's or Doctorate

What is the highest level of education you have completed?



7. Most individuals can get to church in 15 to 30 minutes.

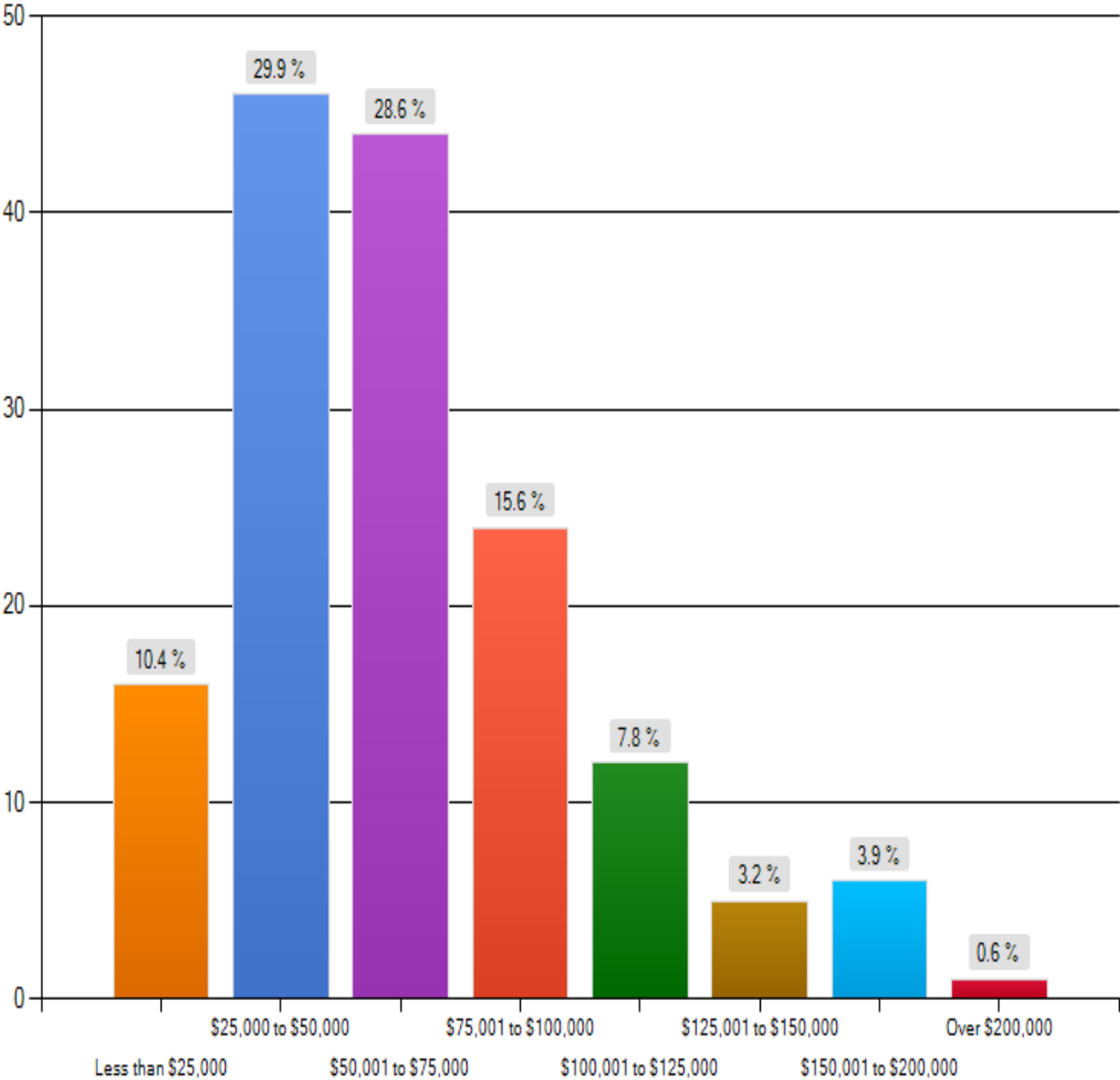


8. The majority of members (64%) are retired and the same percentage are married/partnered.

9. Of those who responded there were 40 children within the families, 33 of whom are participating in our RE programmes.

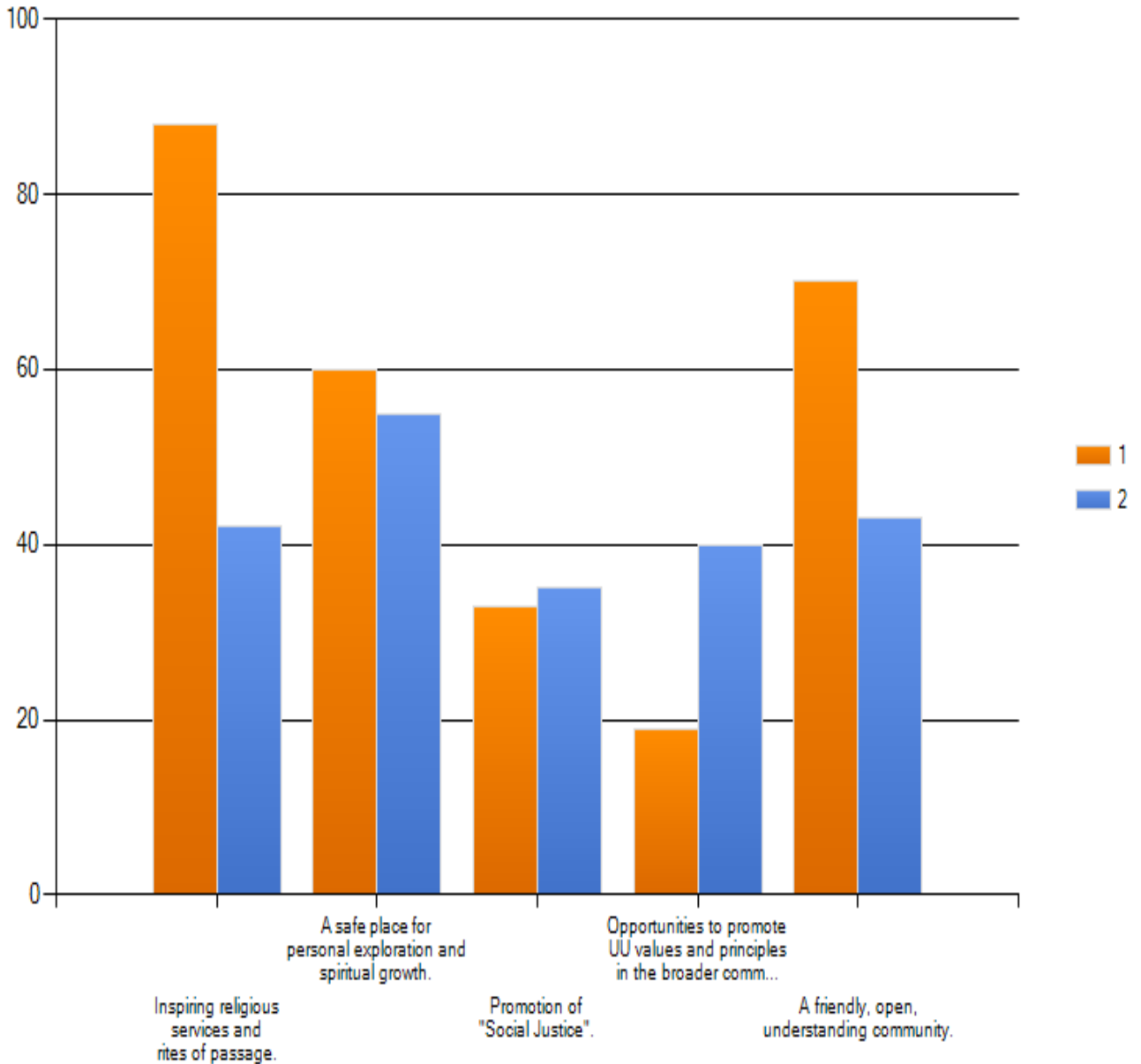
10. With regard to indicating gross family/household income, 8% did not respond

What was your total gross family/household income before taxes last year?



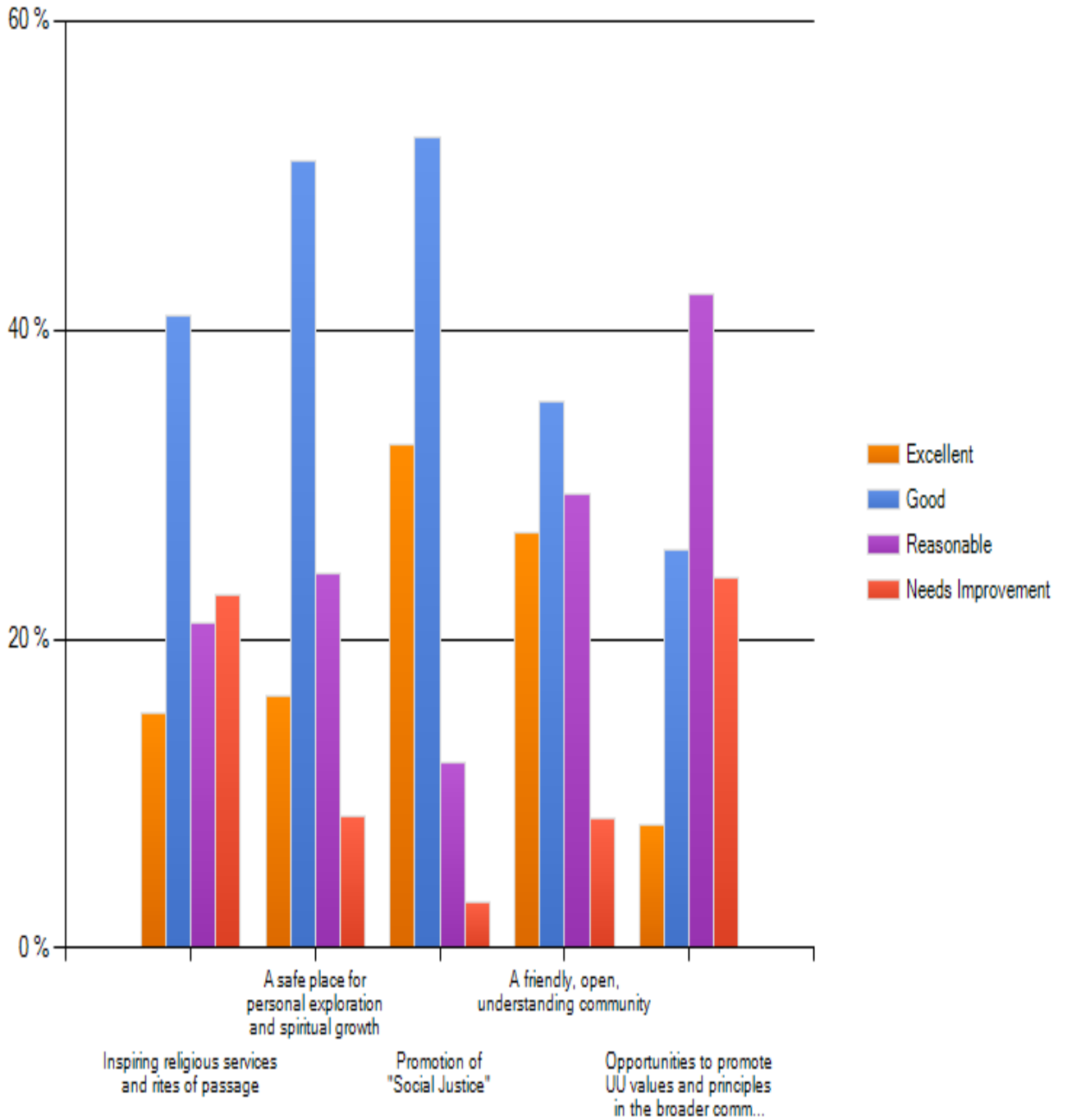
11. This question required respondents to rank order the focus of the church. The bar chart shows 1st and 2nd choices for importance. The top focus was seen to be: *inspiring religious services and rites of passage closely followed by a friendly open community and a safe place for personal and spiritual growth.*

What should our church community be most focused on providing? Rank order the following choices with One being the most important and Six the least important.



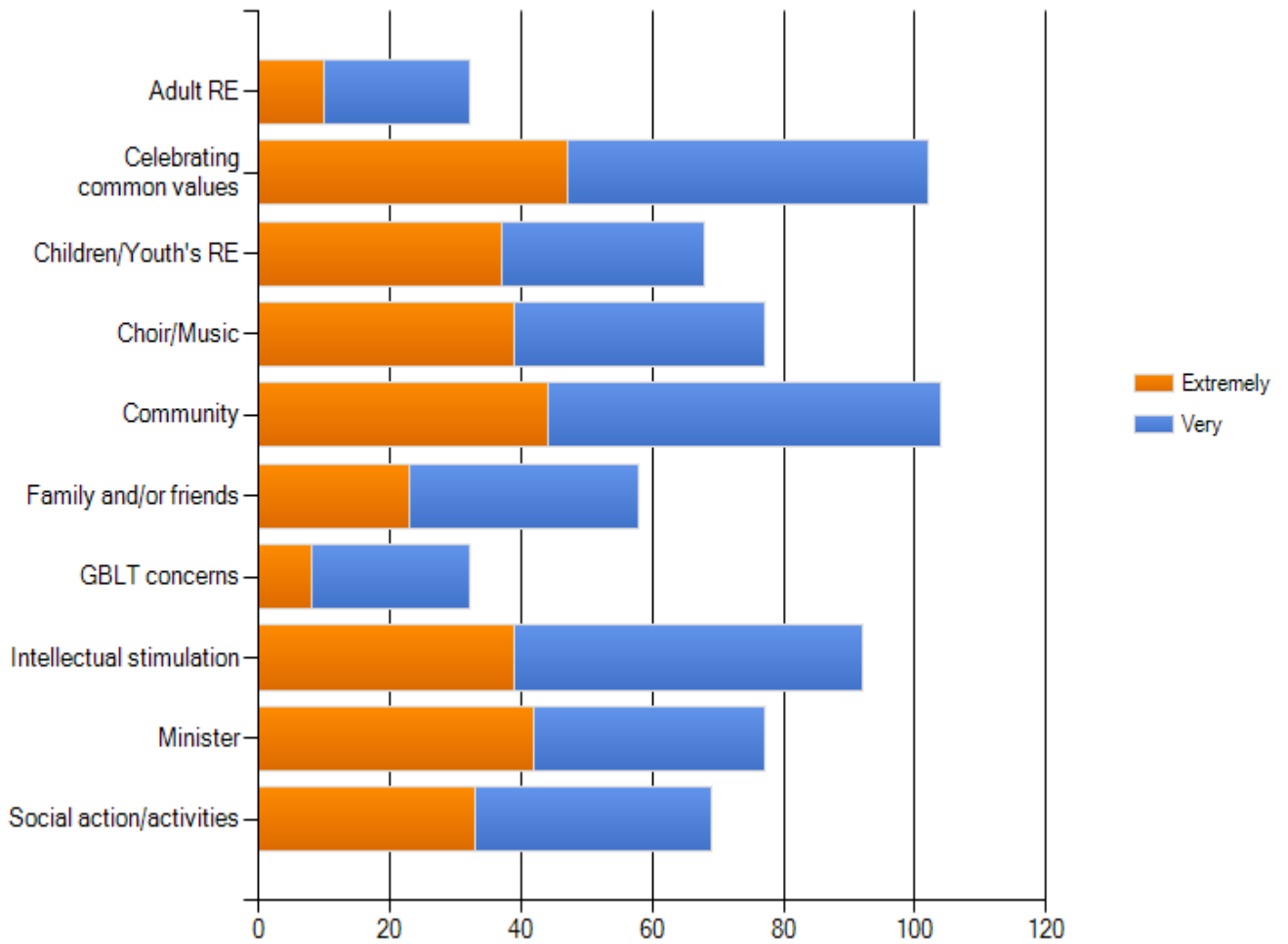
12. In the members' judgement, the church is doing a good job. Areas seen as needing improvement are opportunities to promote UU values and inspiring services.

How well is our church community doing at providing the following?



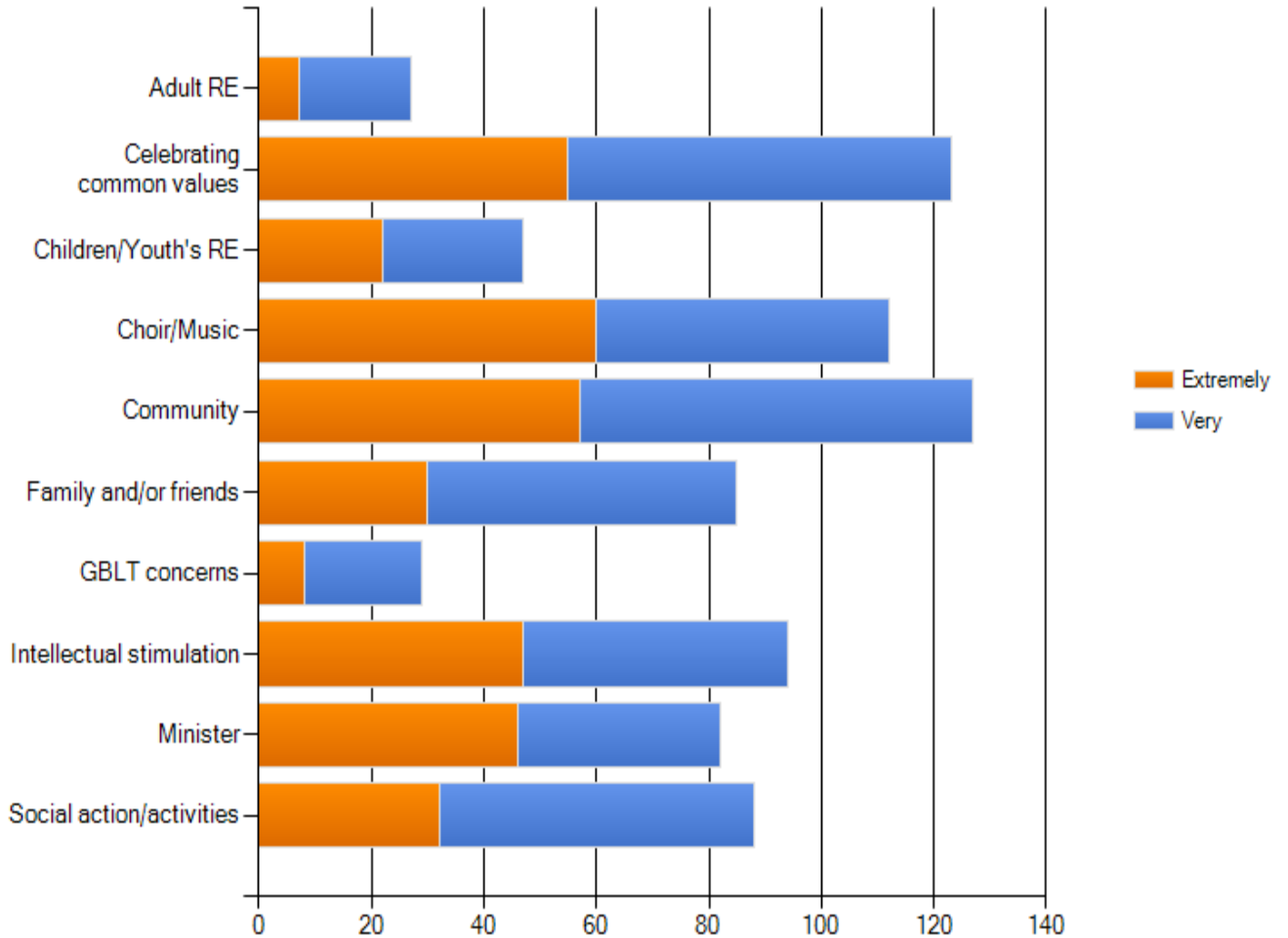
13. The three top draws for first coming to church are community, celebrating common values and intellectual stimulation. (People do not want to park their brain at the door.)

What activity or interest FIRST brought you to this church? Please select at least one response as Extremely important, one as Very important, one as Somewhat important.



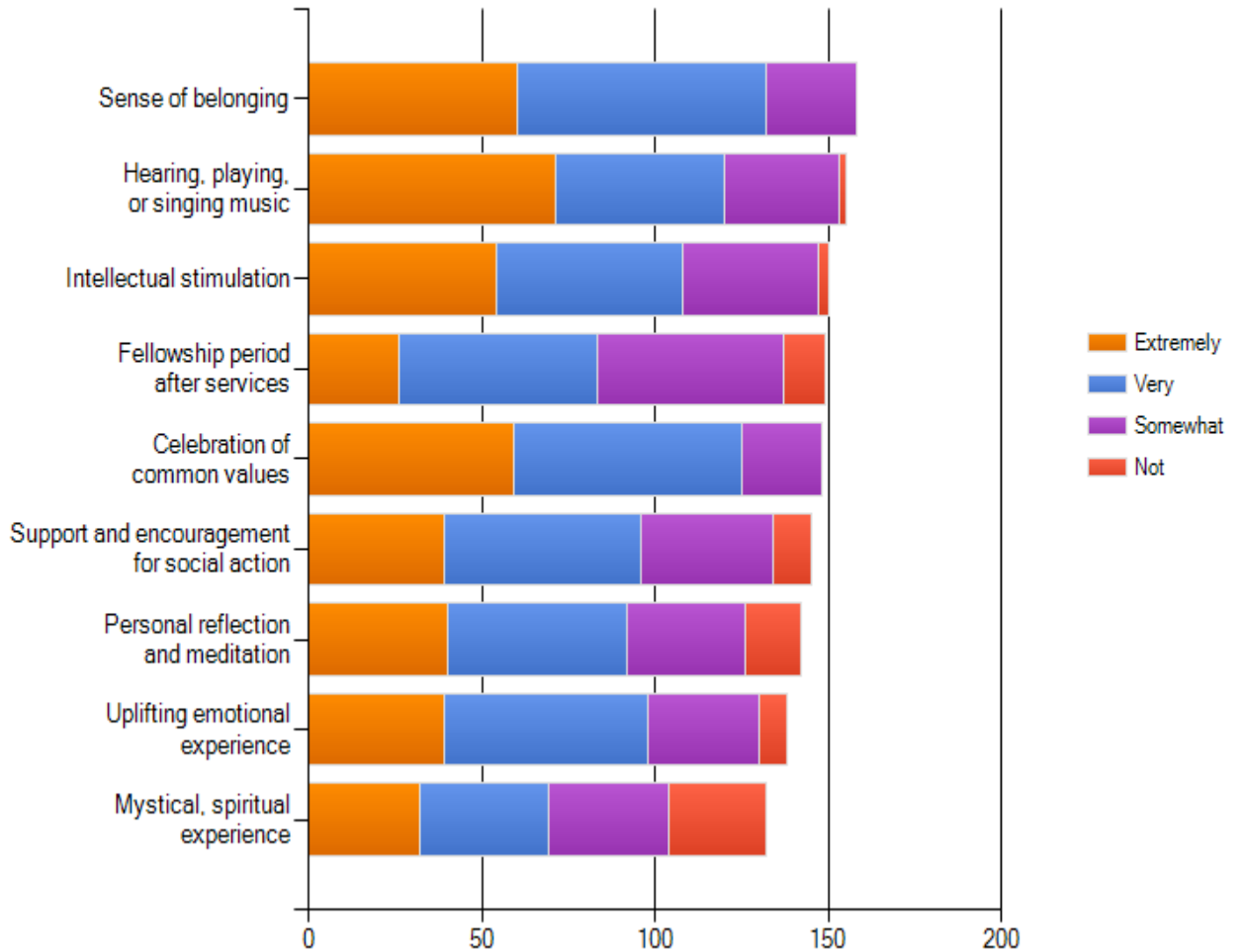
14. They continue to stay for community, celebrating common values, and choir/ music. Intellectual stimulation, social action, family and friends and the minister are also clearly important reasons for continued participation.

Indicate all the reasons you CONTINUE TO ATTEND this church and the importance of each. Please select at least one Extremely important, one Very important and one Somewhat important.



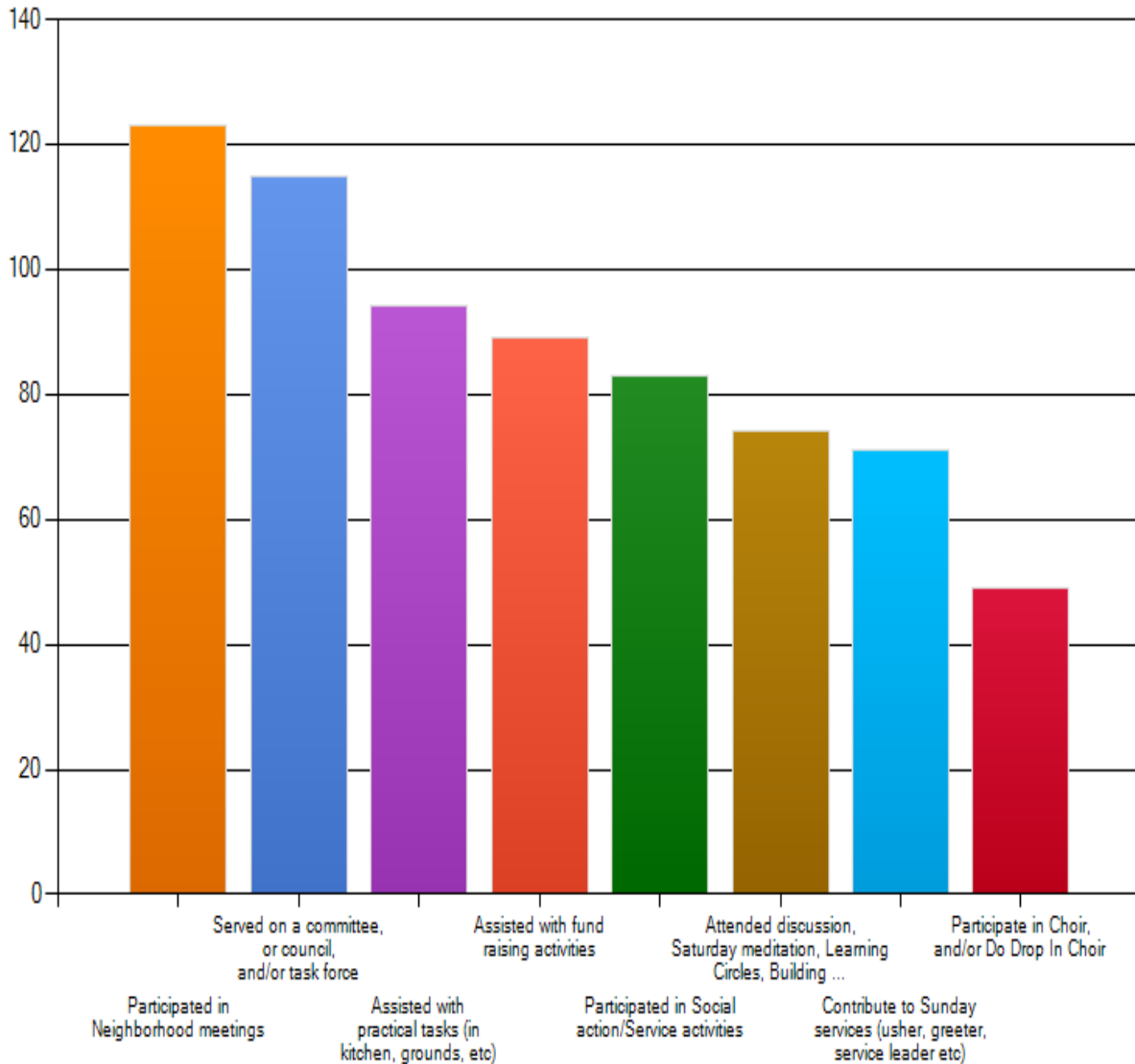
15. Reasons for attending Sunday services are: sense of belonging, celebration of common values and music, followed closely by intellectual stimulation.

Which of the following reasons for attending Sunday worship services are important to you? Please select at least one as Extremely important, one as Very important and one as Somewhat important.

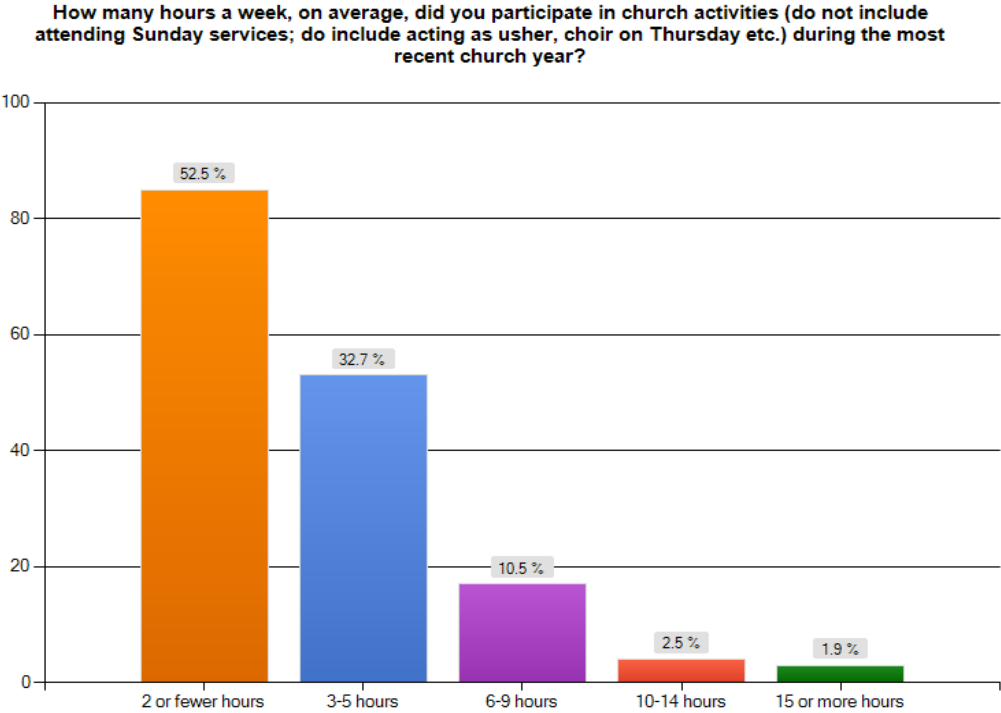


16. Our members are active within the church and their participation is not necessarily limited to one area of interest. Standing out tall amongst all others is participation in “neighbourhood groups” closely followed by active engagement in the church organization. The congregation is clearly engaged. Note the number in the choir. This chart indicates participation only in the last two years.

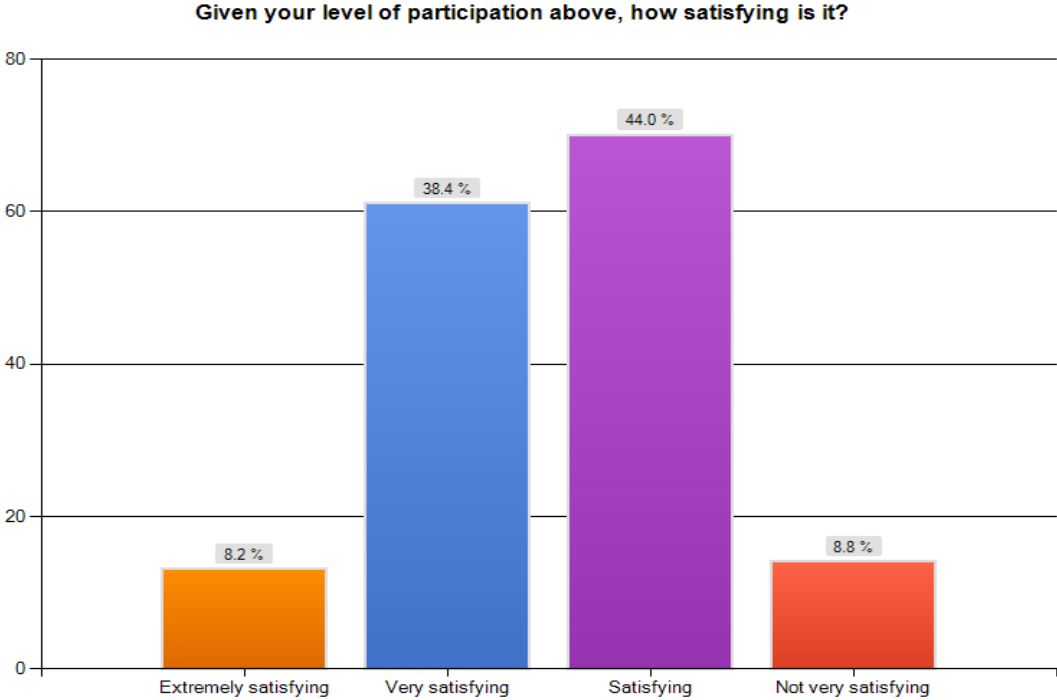
**Which of the following church activities have you been involved in during the last two years?
Please check all that apply.**



17. One third of the congregation is reporting volunteering 3-5 hours a week not including Sunday service.

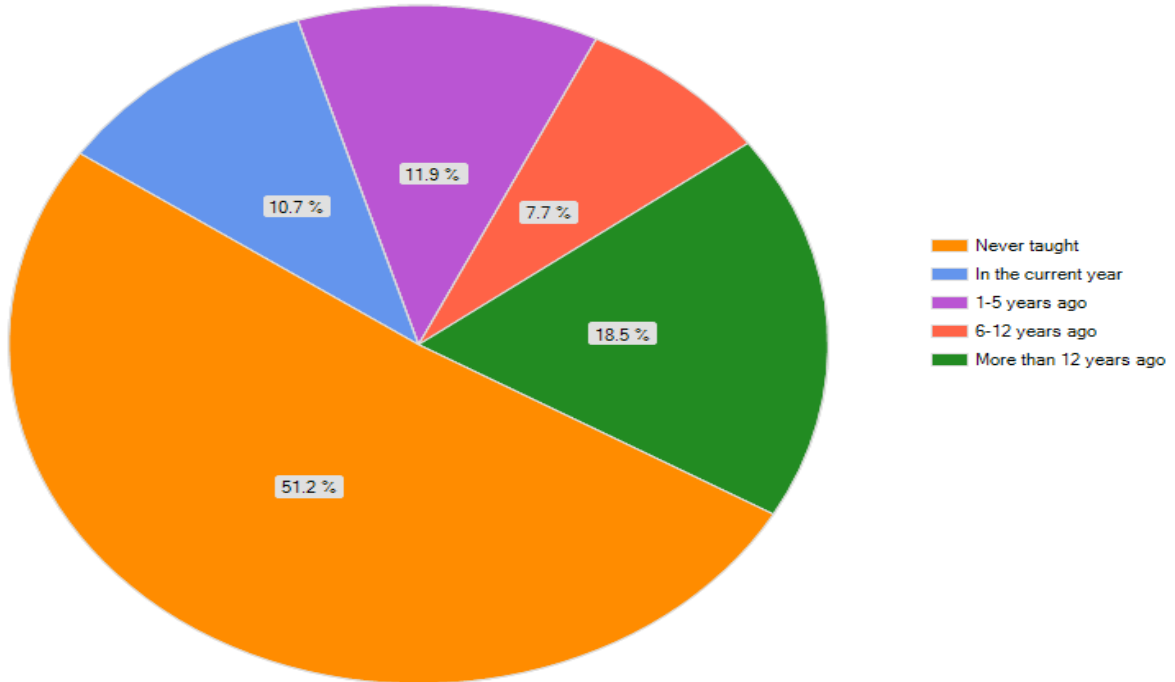


18. Over 90% find their contributed time to be worthwhile.



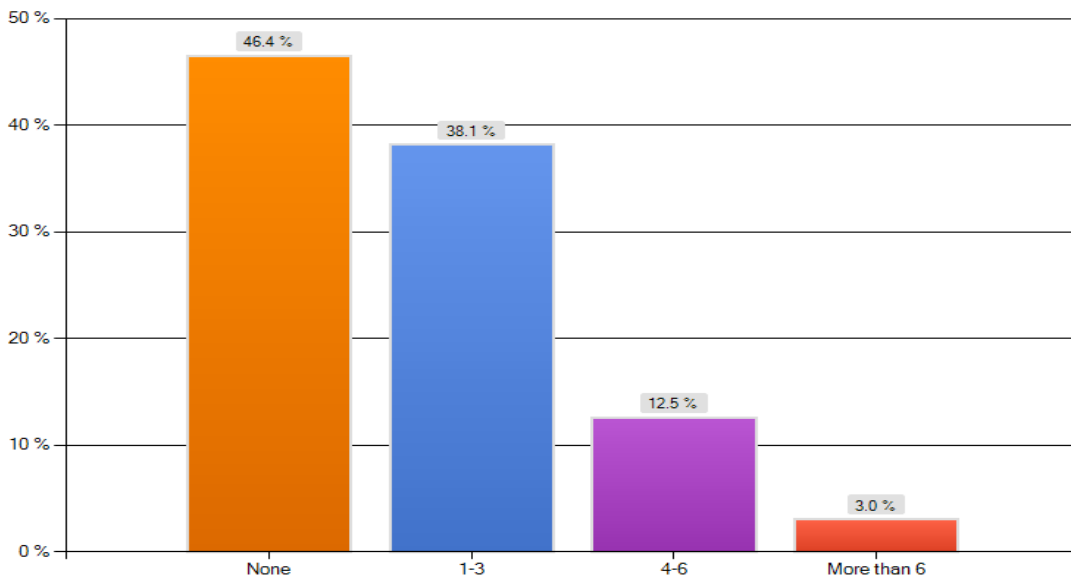
19. Approximately 49% of respondents have taught Children/Youth RE classes at one time or another.

Have you taught Children/Youth's RE classes either here or elsewhere in the past? If so, how recently did you teach?

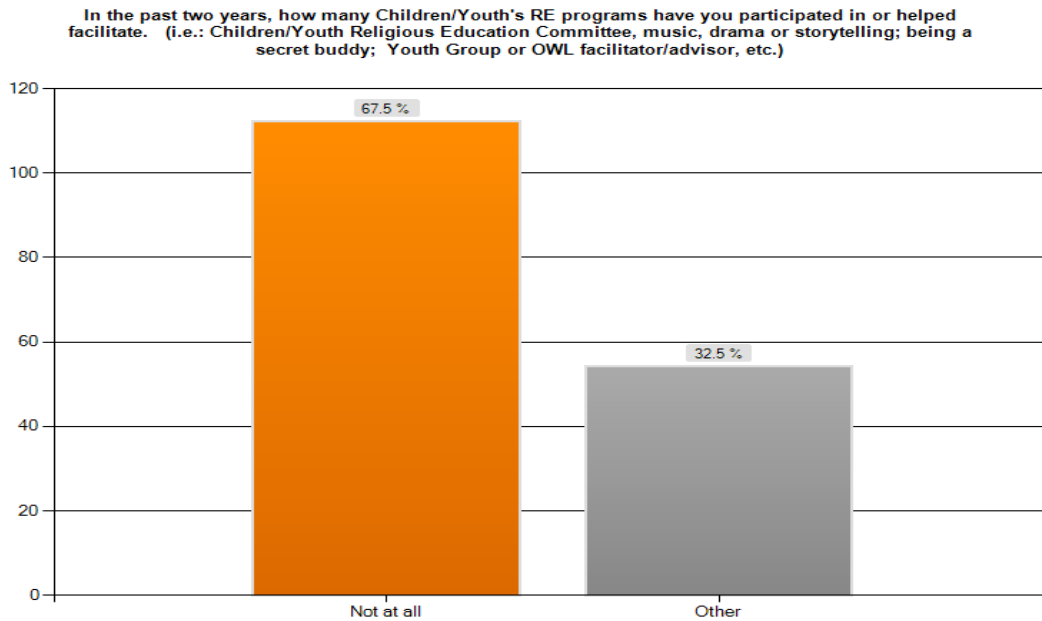


20. This picture of Adult RE participation is indicative of the time frame over the past two years. The Adult Religious Education is currently experiencing a renewal.

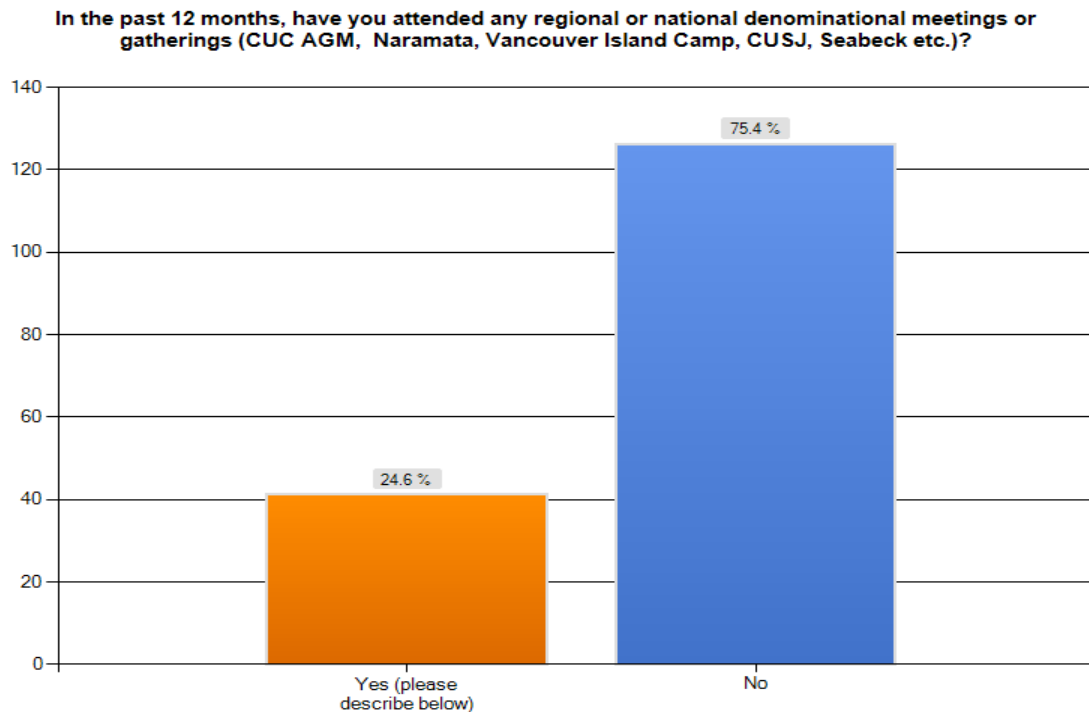
How many Adult RE groups or programs have you participated in over the past two years? (i.e. Saturday Meditation, Learning Circles, Building Your Own Theology, Healing Circles, You and UU, Community Issues Forums, etc)



21. This question does not include teaching which is reflected in question 19. The “other” column reflects those who have supported Children’s Religious Education (CRE) activities. In some programmes the (e.g. Secret Buddies) opportunities for participation are limited by the number of registered children, despite this limit roughly one third of respondents, in the past two years have participated in Children’s Religious Education.



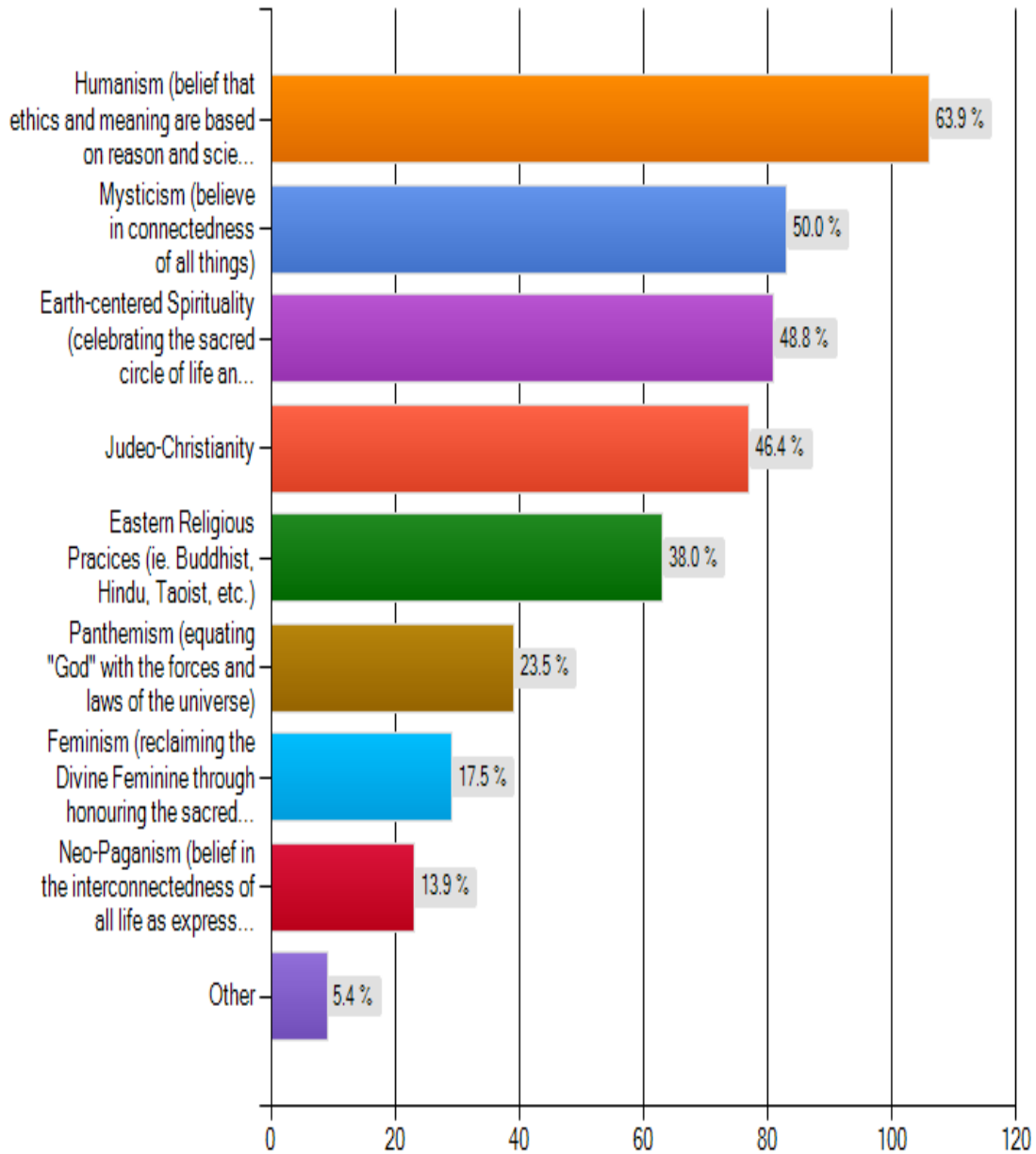
22. 25% participate in Denominational affairs:



23. Of those respondents who declared a childhood religious background, 71% declared Protestant, 9% Catholic and 7% UU.

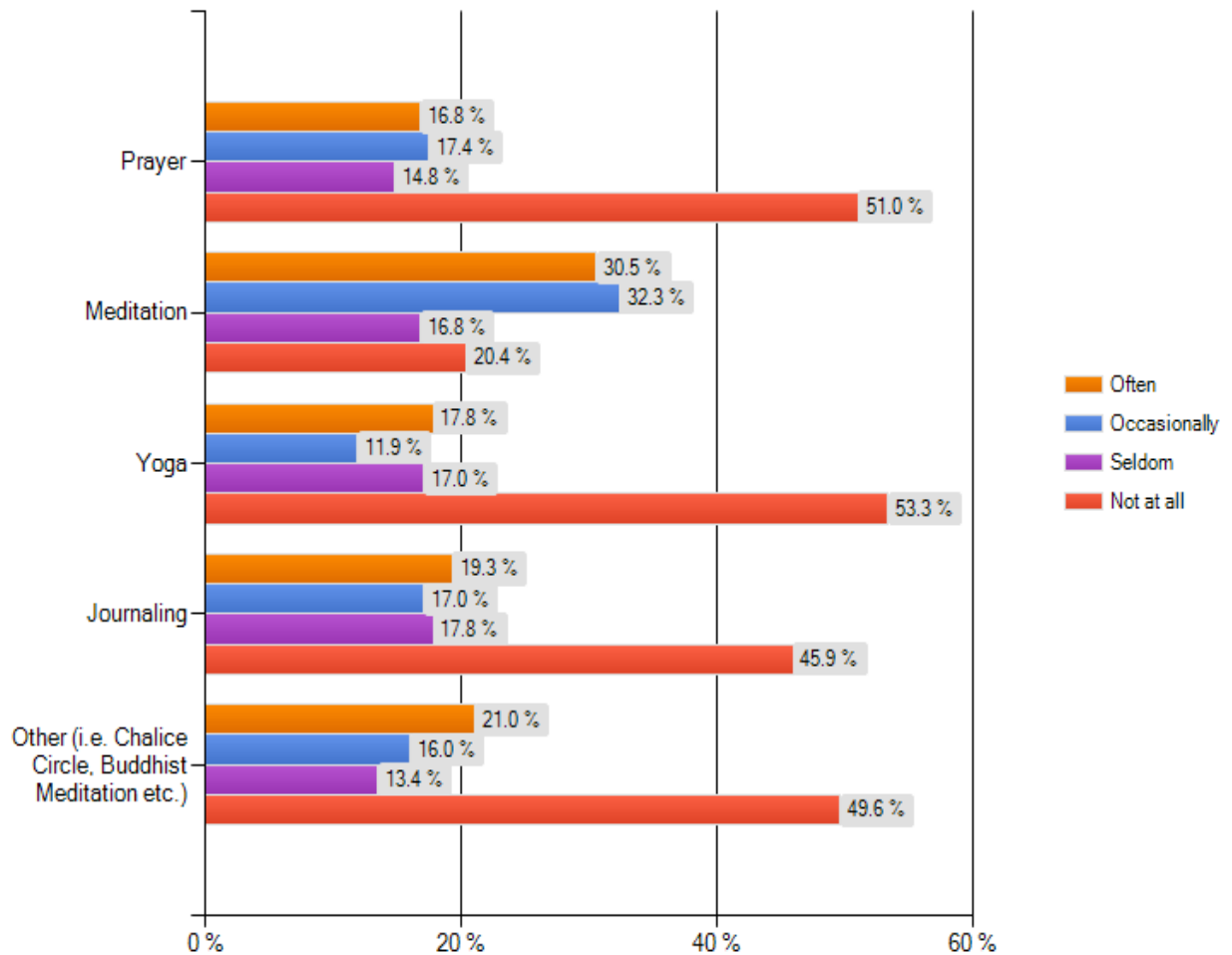
24. When asked about what informs their spiritual practice, respondents were able to choose more than one category and most did!

Which of the following (if any) inform your spiritual practice? Select all that apply.



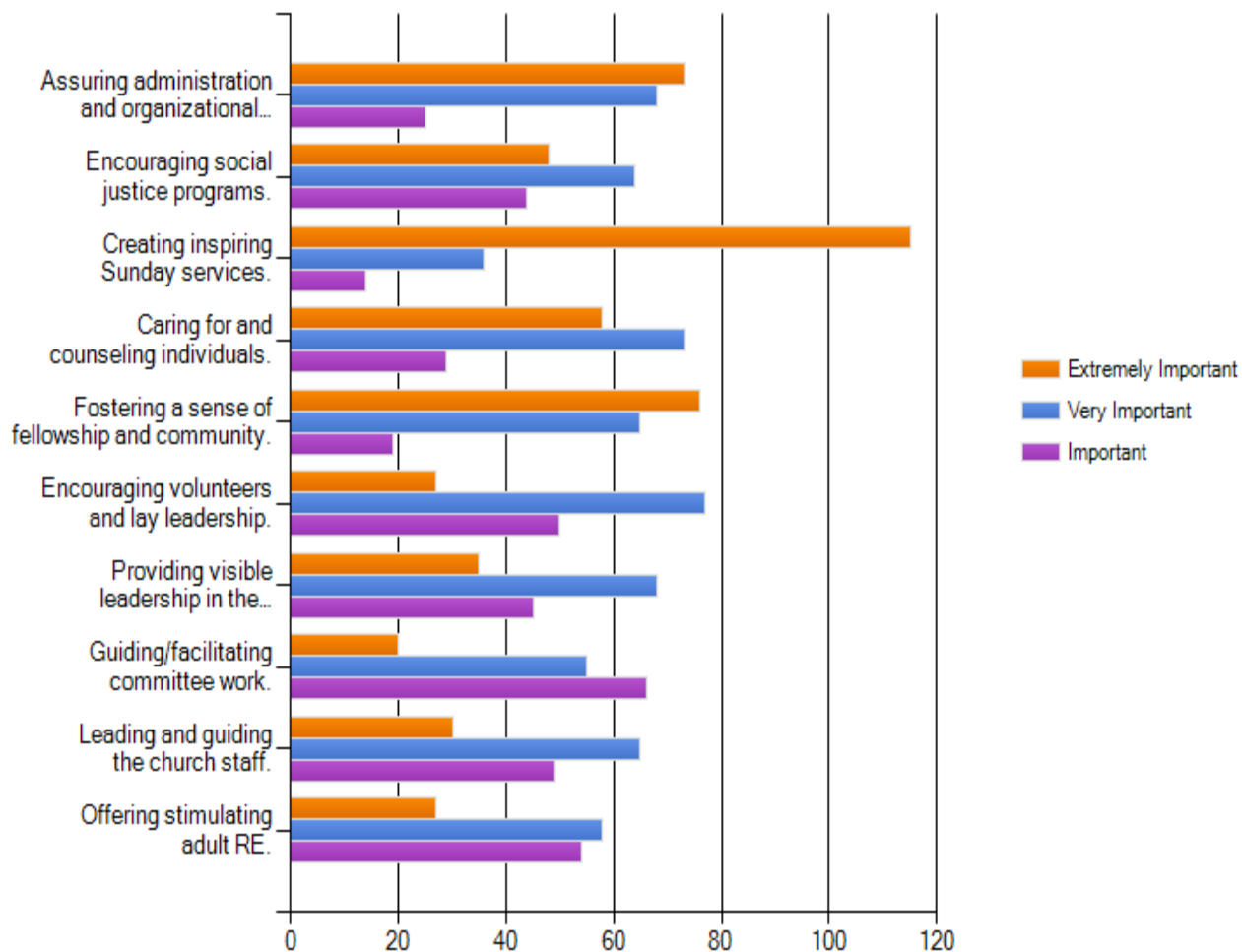
25. When it comes to Meditation, Prayer, Journaling, Yoga and Small Group Ministry, there is not a strong participation rate in these practices. The significance to note is the “not at all” column on the right.

How frequently do you engage in the following practices?



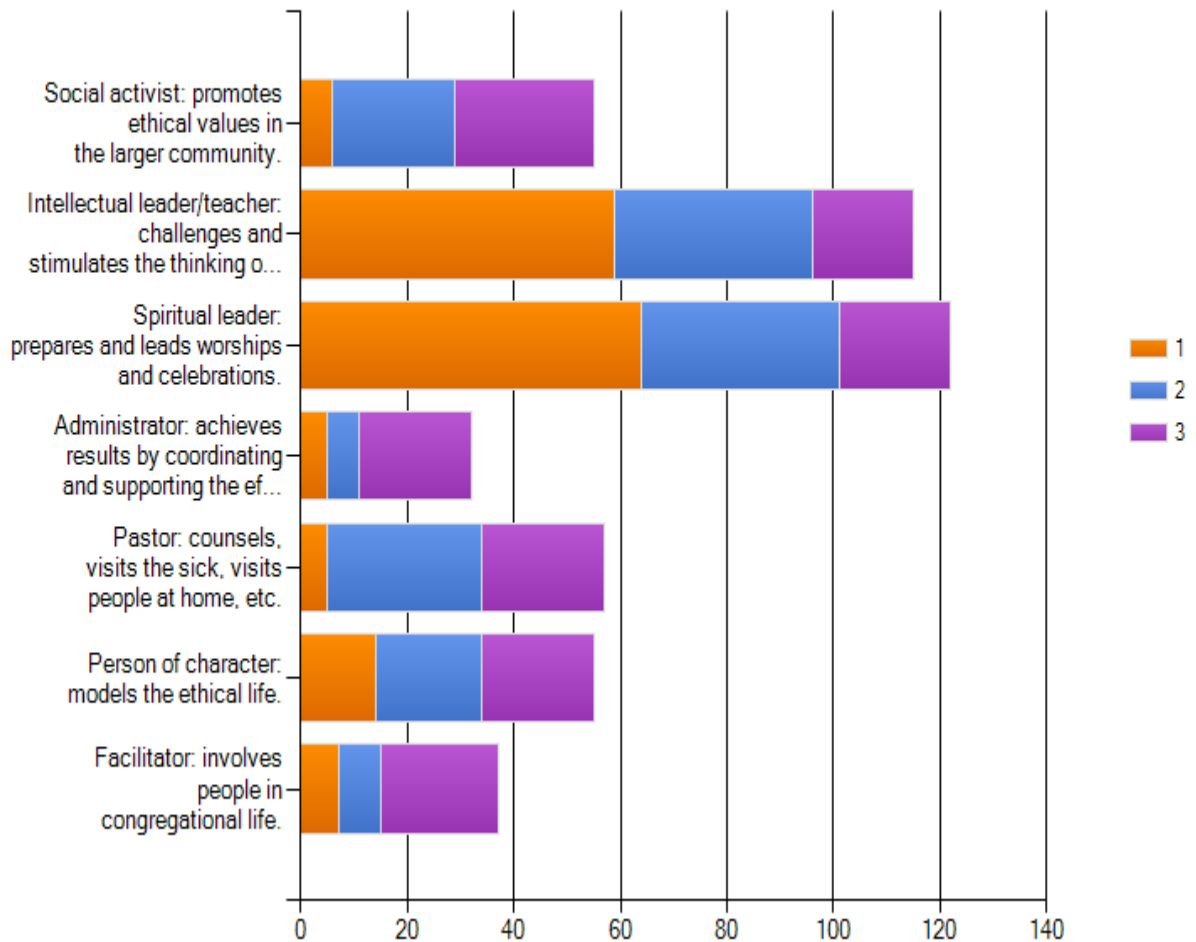
26. Creating inspiring Sunday services stands out in the top five “important church functions”; the other second tire items being: assuring administration, fostering community, pastoral care and social responsibility. Others like “providing visible leadership in the community” are also seen to be “important”.

Given that responsibility in the church is shared among the minister, other staff, lay leadership and members, how important are each of the following functions to the success of the church?



27. The functions of spiritual leader and intellectual leader were ranked first or second by the majority of the respondents. The selection “third most important” is ranked fairly equally across the seven choices. If the results are filtered to include respondents with experience at the board level the importance of “administration” increases significantly to be ranked clearly in third spot.

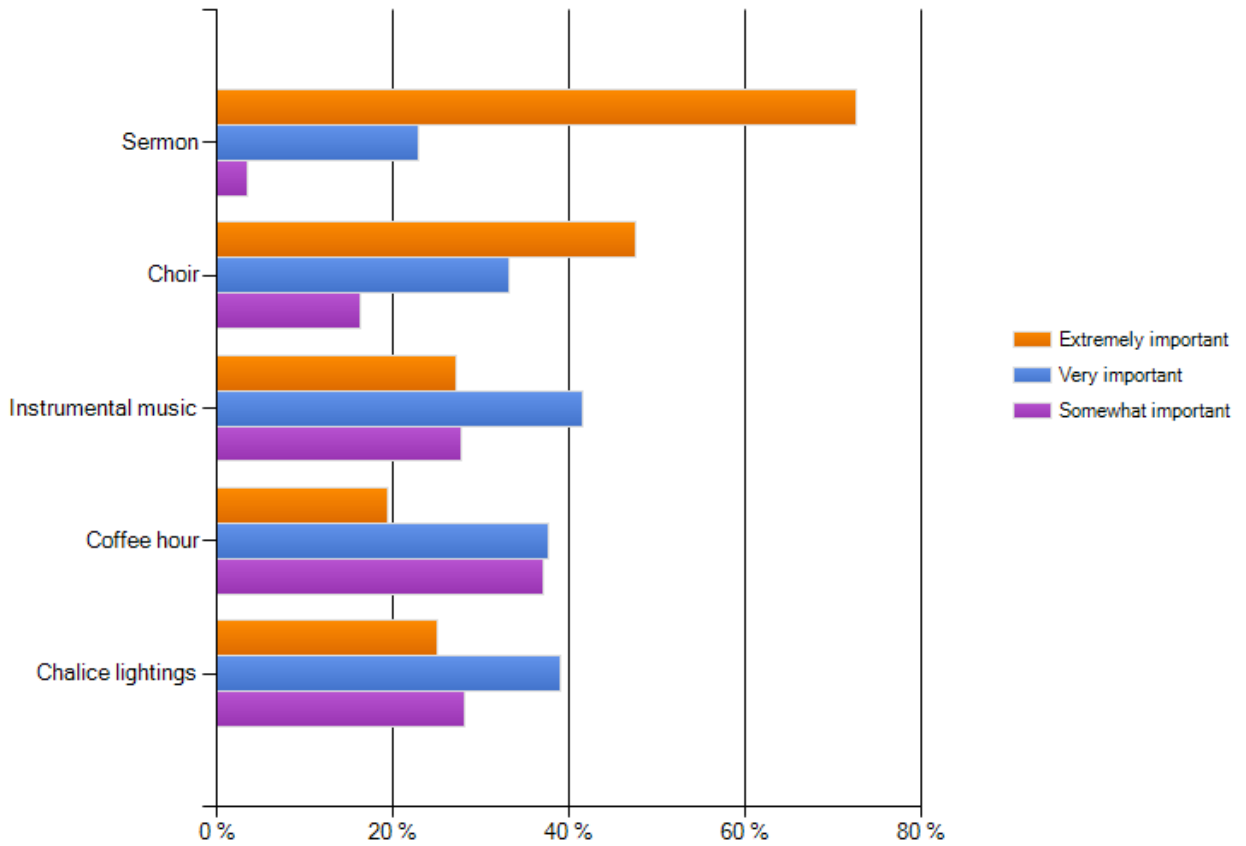
A variety of functions comprise a minister’s work. Each minister has to prioritize these functions, and thus his or her time. In what rank order would you like our next minister to do so? (Use 1 as the most important and 7 as the least) You might find it easier to select number one and seven first then next two and six, followed by three and five.



28. The current practice of preaching 3 times per month was confirmed.

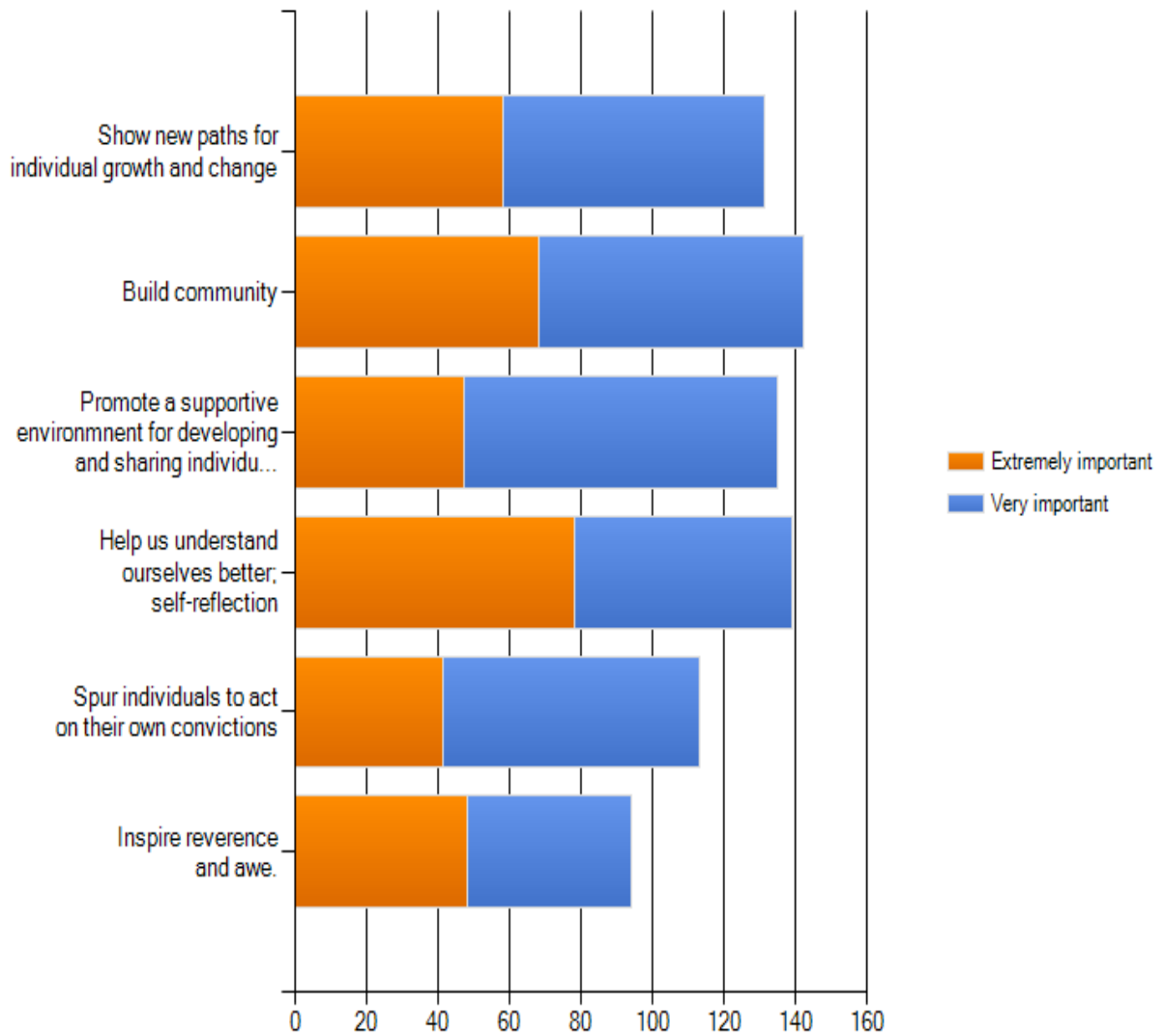
29. In Sunday service, as you might expect, the sermon and the choir stand out as the two key elements followed by instrumental music. The importance of coffee hour however can not be underestimated nor the routine practice of chalice lighting. One comment provided stands out: *“Polite, polished and prepared leadership in all aspects of Sunday Worship Services, from planning to ‘performance’, to ensure that sacred space is energetically created and held.”*

How important to you, as part of a Sunday worship service, are the following items?



30. The top four service objectives are very closely ranked and the others are not insignificant either.

How important to you are these Sunday worship service objectives?



31. In response to the question what are the “three strengths of the church: respondents indicated the following:
- a) Strong and caring community;
 - b) Social justice actions;
 - c) Music; and
 - d) The physical attributes of buildings and grounds were also frequently mentioned
32. Respondents identified the following themes that needed work:
- a) Membership growth particularly by attracting young people and families with a strong RE programme;
 - b) Outreach to the larger community, establishing a presence and visibility as well as communicating our activities and contributions and promoting our values; and.
 - c) Creating a stable financial base.
33. We had 129 responses to “What question would you ask the ministerial candidates?” The responses were as diverse as the people answering them with no apparent themes. A sampling include: What are your goals, aspirations, and interest (what book are your reading?). How do you herd cats? Are you prepared to love us warts and all? What made you choose to be a minister? What are your greatest strengths? What is your focus? What issues are you proud to have taken a public stand on? What do you enjoy about being a minister? What do you like the least or find the most frustrating element of being a minister?
34. 61 responded to the question “any other comments?” with many excellent comments, suggestions and words of encouragement for the Search Committee. Comments and suggestions included:
- “---While an intellectually stimulating sermon is important, it is ---- dynamism that will get our members up off their seats. --- Actions are called for, we need to promote action.”
 - “--- *I am longing for a minister who will inspire me, someone who will challenge me in the way I live my life and offer insights that I can carry with me through the week. I long for a minister who focuses on things that matter and energizes our church community to make a difference in each other's lives and in the lives of those outside our community.*”
 - “Danger of choosing a strong thinker who then may not have inter-personal warmth and capacity to "minister" to people. “
 - “*We need someone who is able to galvanize the talents of this congregation. We also need someone who can help us think and reflect more deeply and on a spiritual level.* “
 - “---developing "heart/feelings" in a world that is increasing "head centered".
 - “*I am hopeful for --- holistic growth --- FUNdraising and outreach activities in support and celebration of who we are becoming...*”

- “I am a new member still finding my place in the church. I am very happy with the level of intellectual integrity and the church's approach to social problems. I would like to see more spirituality although I have mixed feelings about any sort of higher power I would like to explore themes of spirituality within this environment. ---“
- “--- one must recognize that no one can be "all things to all people".
- “--- we need a minister who will find a way to be in touch with all areas of our church community as well as having a profile in the larger community. --- A new minister must get us past our fear of change and understand that such a fear is fairly deep-seated in our church community.
- “*This church --- needs a leader who can help us to sense the winds of change and to have the courage to do what must be done. ---*”