

MINISTERIAL SURVEY 2022

Congregational Summary

Background: It has been traditional for the congregation to do a survey of the ministers and congregational life approximately every three years, organized by the Committee on Ministry. The last survey was done in 2018, but it was decided in 2021 to delay for a year, given the many disruptions associated with the Covid pandemic. This year, the survey was open during March and April, and 109 members & friends took part. (In the 2018 survey, the number was 110). Most used the online version on Survey Monkey, with a handful completing hard copy forms; this report is based on all 109 respondents. The questions are given as they appeared in the survey, with a quantitative break-down for fixed-alternative questions; for the open-ended questions, all members of the Committee on Ministry read all responses, as did both Ministers. The committee members then identified commonalities, and came to a consensus about what represented a fair digest in each case; what follows is a summary of common themes. Where a topic was raised by only one or two members, it was decided to omit them from this summary, although the Committee and Ministers did review all responses.

The periodic survey provides the Ministers, the Committee, and all members of the Church community an opportunity to assess and reflect on the functioning and health of the Church. Given the challenges posed during the pandemic, doing this survey seems particularly significant, and you are encouraged to review the results, and think about your own perspective on our community.

The Committee wishes to thank John Hopewell for his work in posting the survey to Survey Monkey, and for providing both the analysis of fixed-alternative questions and the data files of all responses. Members of the congregation who have questions or concerns are welcome to contact the Committee: Lorna Anthony, Suellen Guenther, Lynn Hunter, Jan Thomson, and David Vest.

Bill Glassman, Chair

August 2022

1. *What is your name?*

2. *Thinking back to before the pandemic, what have you missed about pre-pandemic church life? What are you looking forward to seeing on return? (Think about all areas of church life – not just worship.)*
 - Face-to-face
 - Hugging

- Jazz Vespers
 - Singing
 - Being present for sermons
 - Seeing children
 - Small group activities; eg. N.G., committee mtgs, volunteering
3. *Thinking about congregational life during the pandemic, is there anything you've appreciated about our ways of doing things that you hope we will retain post-pandemic? (Again, think about all areas of church life.)*
- Zoom (as well as hybrid)
 - Remote speakers and remote music
4. *How connected are you feeling to our congregational community?*
- Very connected – 38 (35%)
 - Somewhat connected - 50 (46%)
 - Neutral - 5 (4%)
 - Somewhat disconnected - 12 (11%)
 - Very disconnected - 3 (3%)
5. *What sort of things help you feel connected?*
- Face-to-face
 - Choir
 - Volunteering
 - Being contacted
 - Neighbourhood groups
 - Soul Matters
 - Jazz Vespers
 - Courses
 - Newsletter; e-weekly
 - Chat rooms
 - Anna keeping families connected
6. *Is there something that would help you feel more connected?*
- About 30% said “no” or “can't think of anything”
 - Being rid of pandemic and all cautions associated with it.
 - Returning to in-person services (coffee, lunches, etc.)
 - Connections by phone, email, zoom and mail
 - Greeters in coffee hour for new folks
 - Being contacted other than about money (1 person)
 - Using proper pronoun (1 person)

7. *What do you appreciate about the ministry of Revs. Melora and Shana? Specific examples are appreciated.*

- Homilies – (every glowing term imaginable)
- Appreciation of differing but complementary styles
- Birthday calls (many respondents mentioned this)
- Personal sharing
- Warmth and caring. Many feel the ministers know who they are and care about what is happening in their lives.
- Their pastoral care, professionalism, courses they lead on current issues, LGBT support and work with the CUC.

8. *Are there things you would like Revs. Shana and Melora to do differently? Again, specific examples are appreciated.*

- Almost 50% did not answer or made comments like “No, they’re both so brilliantly suited to their roles, and execute them graciously.”
- Many comments urging self-care for the ministers.

9. *What is your age?*

- Under 20 - 0
- 20-30 - 0
- 31-40 - 3%
- 41-50 - 4%
- 51-60 - 10%
- 61-70 - 27%
- 71-80 - 41%
- 81-90 - 16%
- Over 90 - 0%

10. *If you have children under age 18, how many in each age range?*

Note: the responses have been omitted here, because there was a very low response rate, and the way the data were gathered makes it hard to interpret (e.g, to tell how many children in each household).

11. *Where do you live?*

- Greater Victoria - 86%
- Other - 14%

12. *Which of the following (if any) inform your spiritual practice? (Please use each term as you define it, and select all that apply.)*

- UU - 69%
- The natural world - 54%

- Spiritual - 49%
- Humanist - 40%
- Buddhist - 24%
- Pagan or Earth-centred traditions - 21%
- Agnostic - 21%
- Atheist - 15%
- Christian - 15%
- Theist - 14%
- Indigenous Spirituality - 11%
- Other - 9% (One person said Sikh should have been included and the format did not allow for writing it in under other.)
- Jewish - 5%
- Hindu - 4%
- Muslim - 3%

13. *How long have you attended this congregation?*

- Less than 2 years - 2 (2%)
- 2-5 years - 24 (23%)
- 6-10 years - 19 (18%)
- 11-20 years - 18 (17%)
- More than 20 years - 41 (39%)

14. *If you first attended services during Covid, or returned to First after a period of non-attendance, what led to this?*

- Reconnected when returning to Victoria because enjoy Unitarian life.
- “(Name omitted) called me in 2020 when I hadn’t pledged anything or attended Zoom services that year. I didn’t feel hounded for money but rather that the caller was interested in how to get me more connected.”
- “We were thrilled to discover a denomination that comes together over values, not dogma. We first tried a couple other Unitarian congregations before.”

15. *If you have not attended Zoom services at all, why not? (Please check all that apply)*

Note: The responses have been omitted here, given the low response rate (only 8 in total). In addition, given that services are now offered in hybrid mode, the information is of limited value.

16. *Finally, this survey is intended to help understand the congregation at this point in time, with particular concern for the role of our ministers. Do you have any other*

thoughts on the ministry of Revs. Shana and Melora that you didn't get a chance to share in the other questions?

From the majority:

- Glowing comments re the ministers and heartfelt anecdotes of their caring.
- Ministers are reason they attend.
- Strong female role models.
- Concern for ministers' well-being and hope they will stay a long time.