

# The Minister Search Committee



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# Church Numbers

Members: 388 (as we report to UUA)

Friends: 70-90

Average Weekly Adult Attendance: 114

Average Weekly Children's RE Attendance: 40

Percentage of Members/Friends who completed the survey: 36%

# Sources We Used

- Survey - 190 total responses
- Cottage Meetings – 65 Participants
- Focus Groups – approximately 30 people
- Staff Interviews
- Congregation Visioning Exercise – 60 attendees
- Beyond Categorical Thinking – 49 attendees

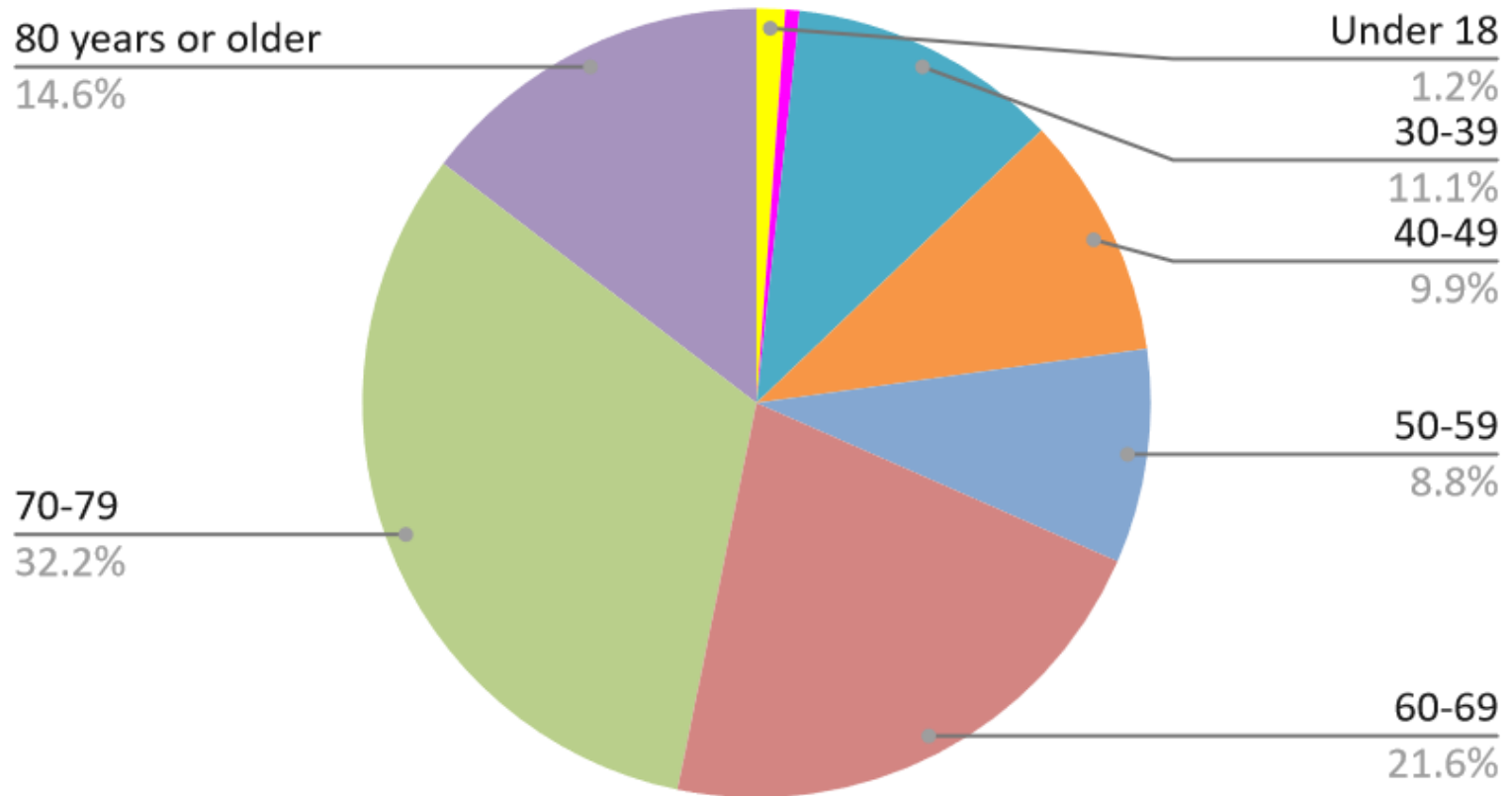
# Survey Summary

This is who we are and what we look like



Who are we?

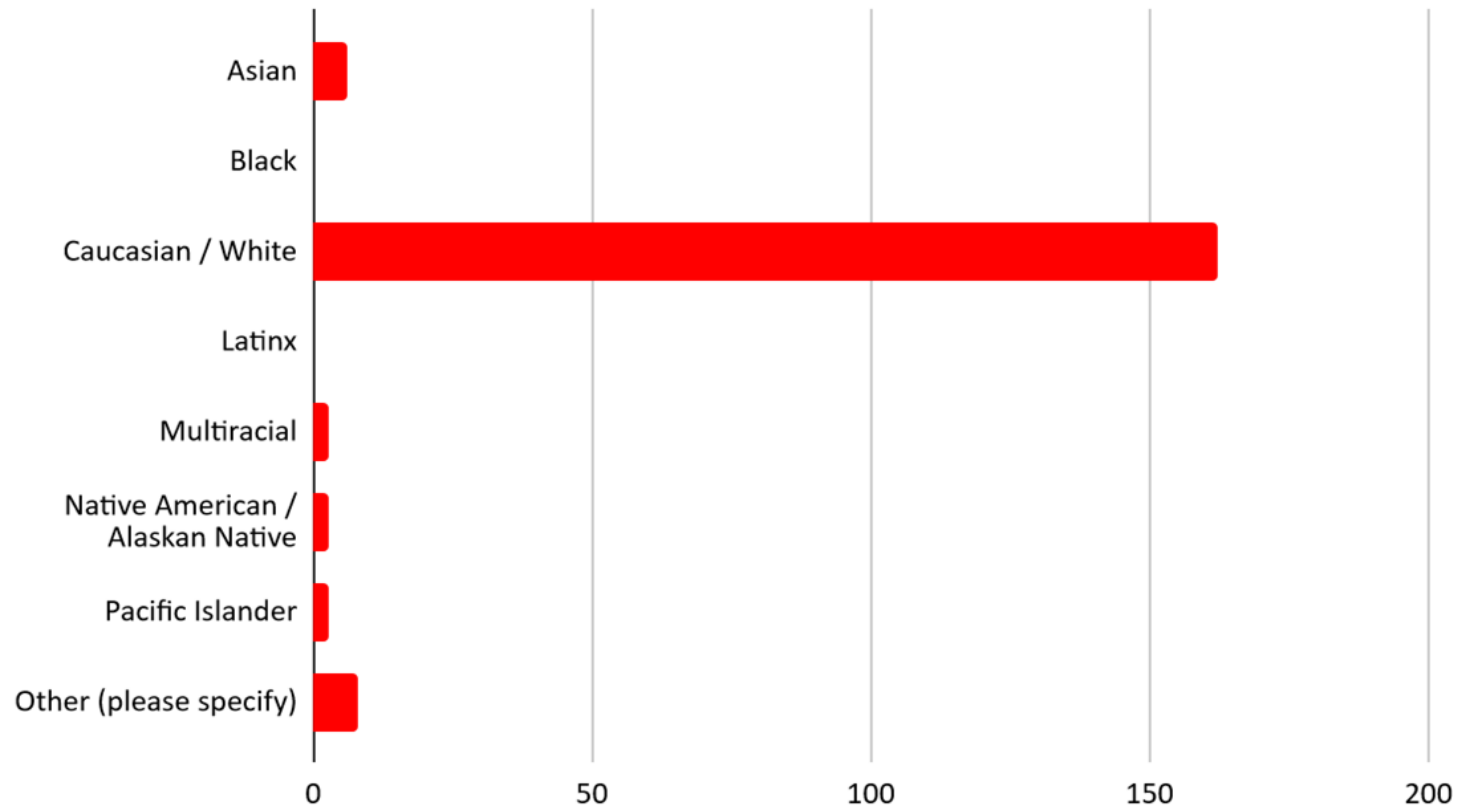
# Age Distribution



These numbers reflect those who responded to our survey, not necessarily the church as a whole.

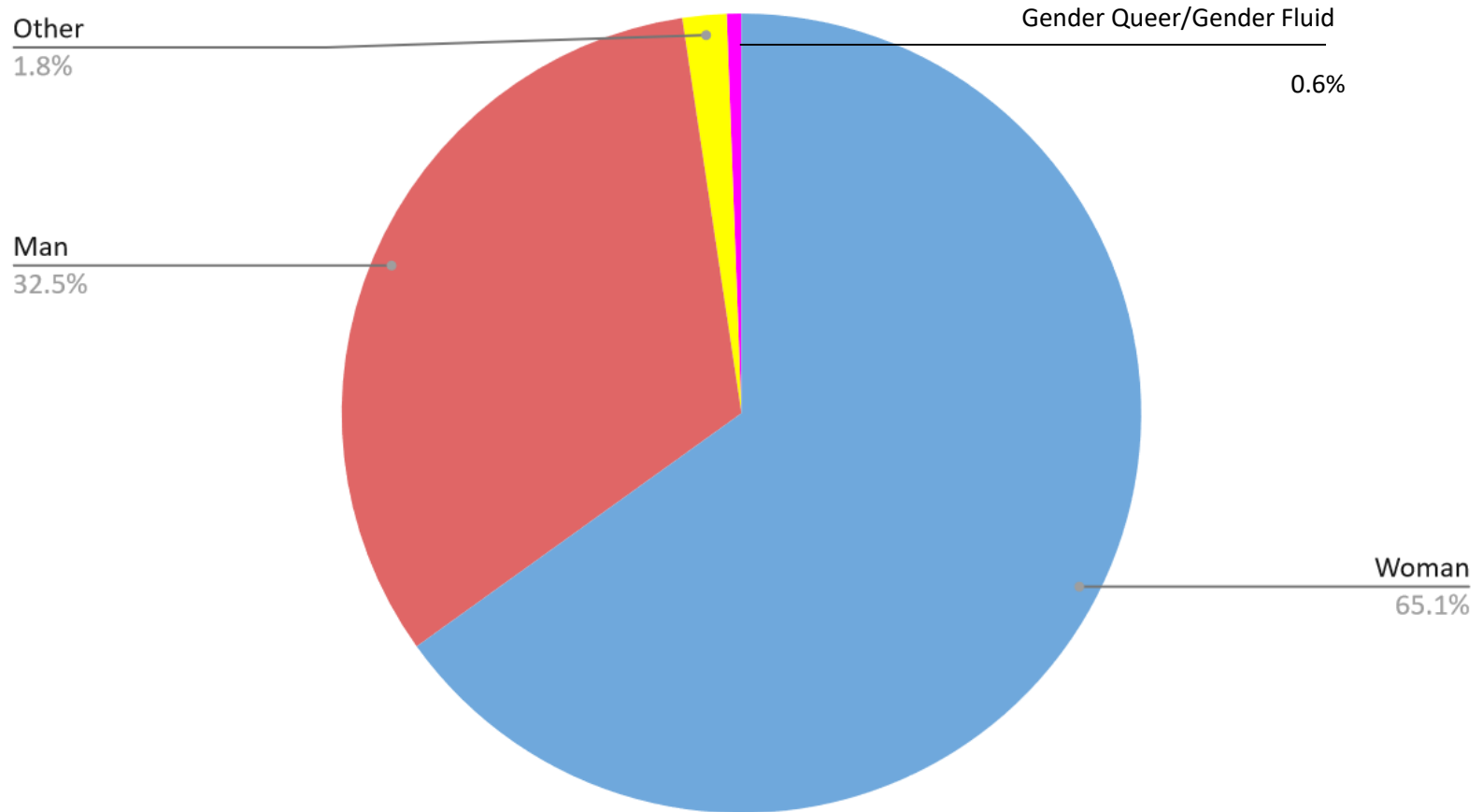
# Ethnicity

(multiple answers allowed)



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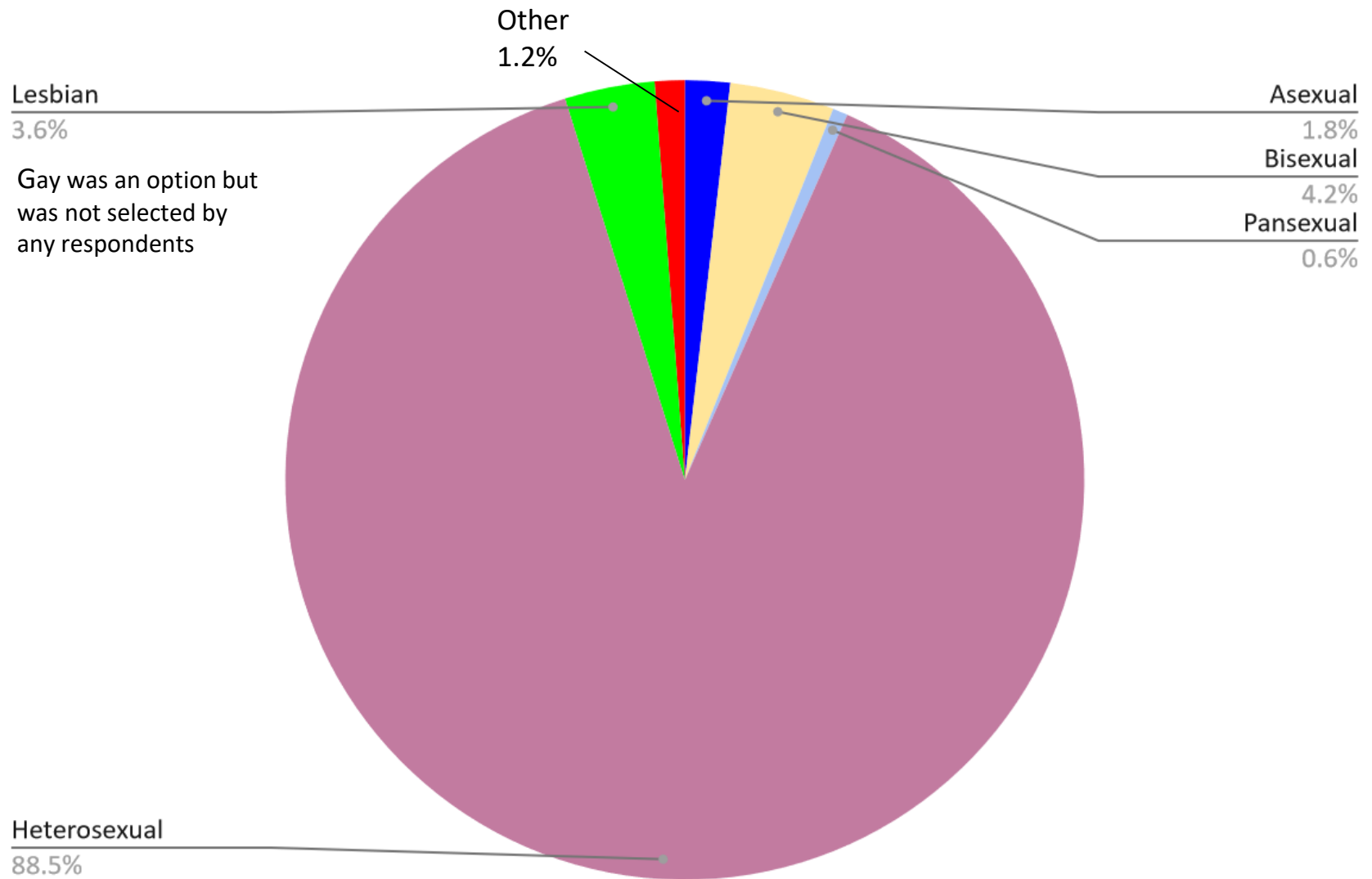
# Gender Distribution



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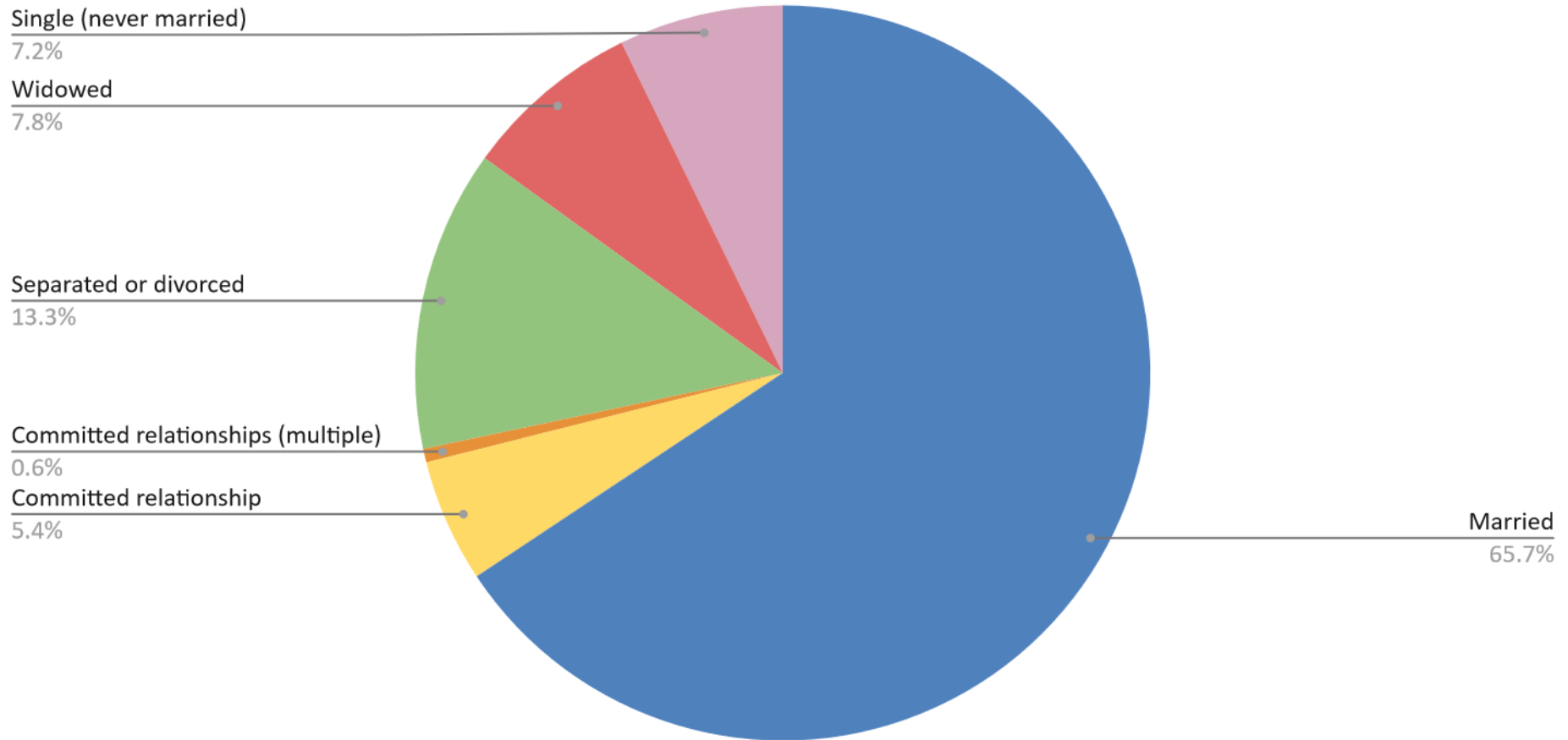


# Sexual Orientation



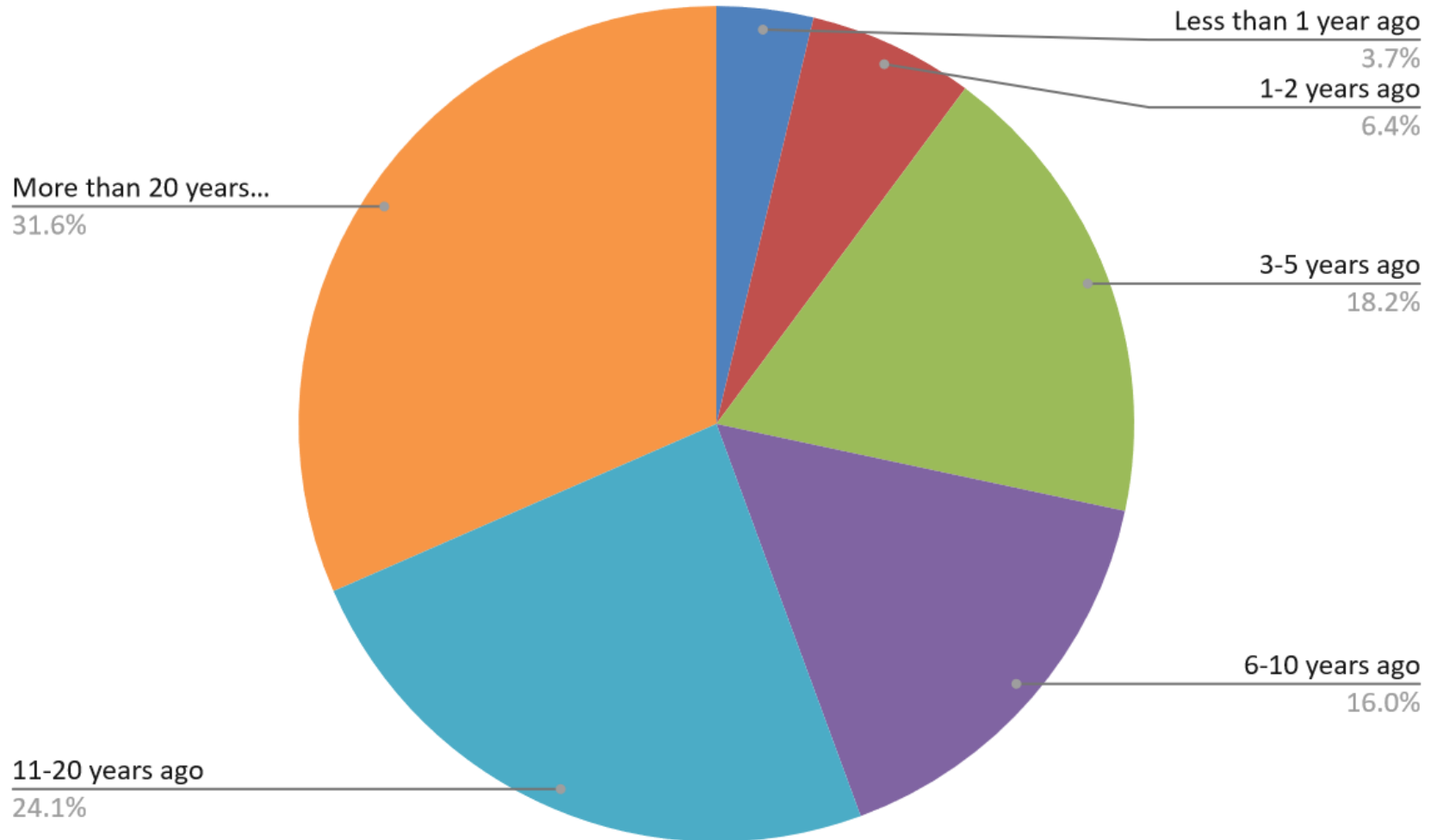
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# Relationship Status



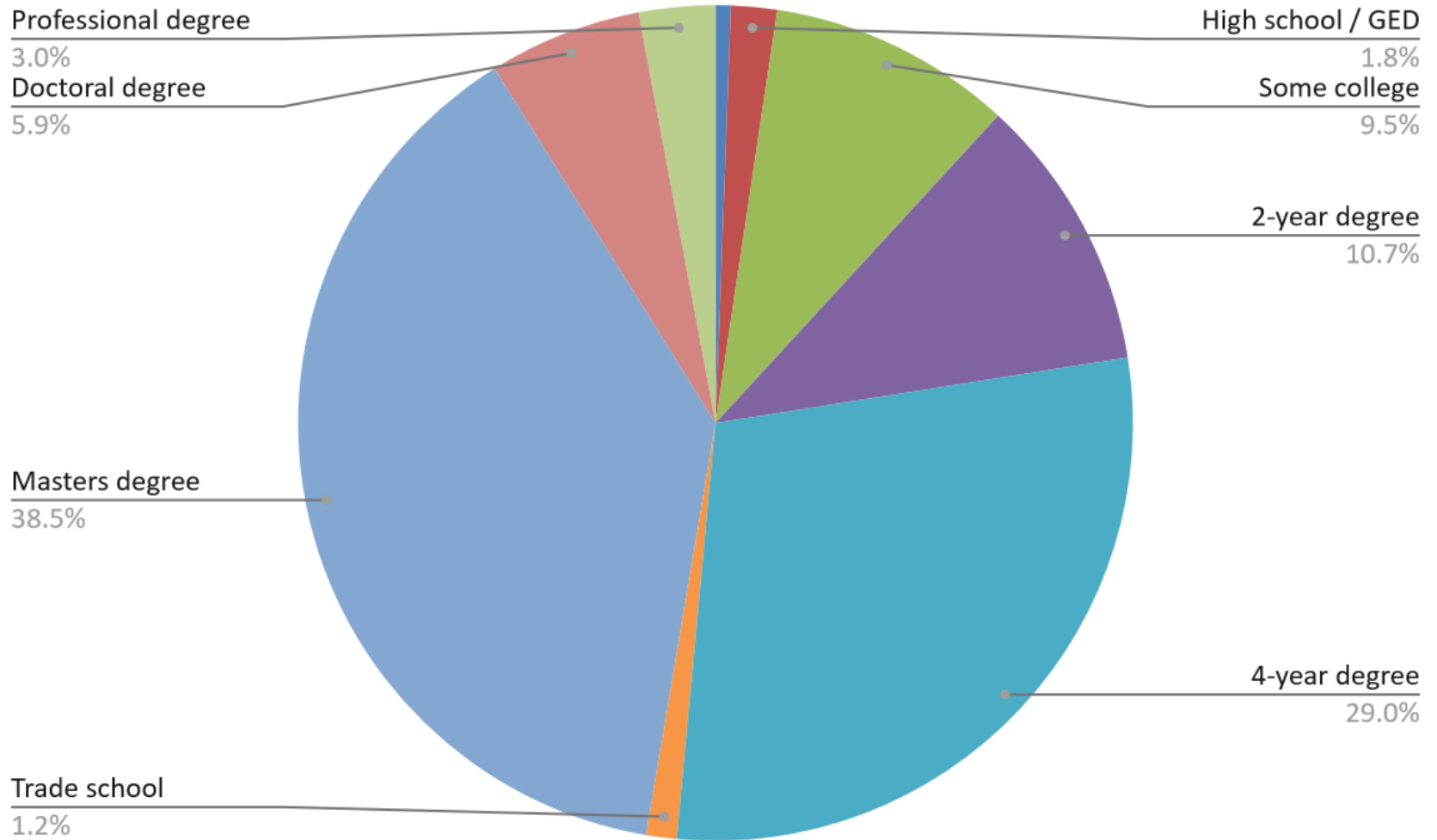
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# When did you start coming to the UU church?



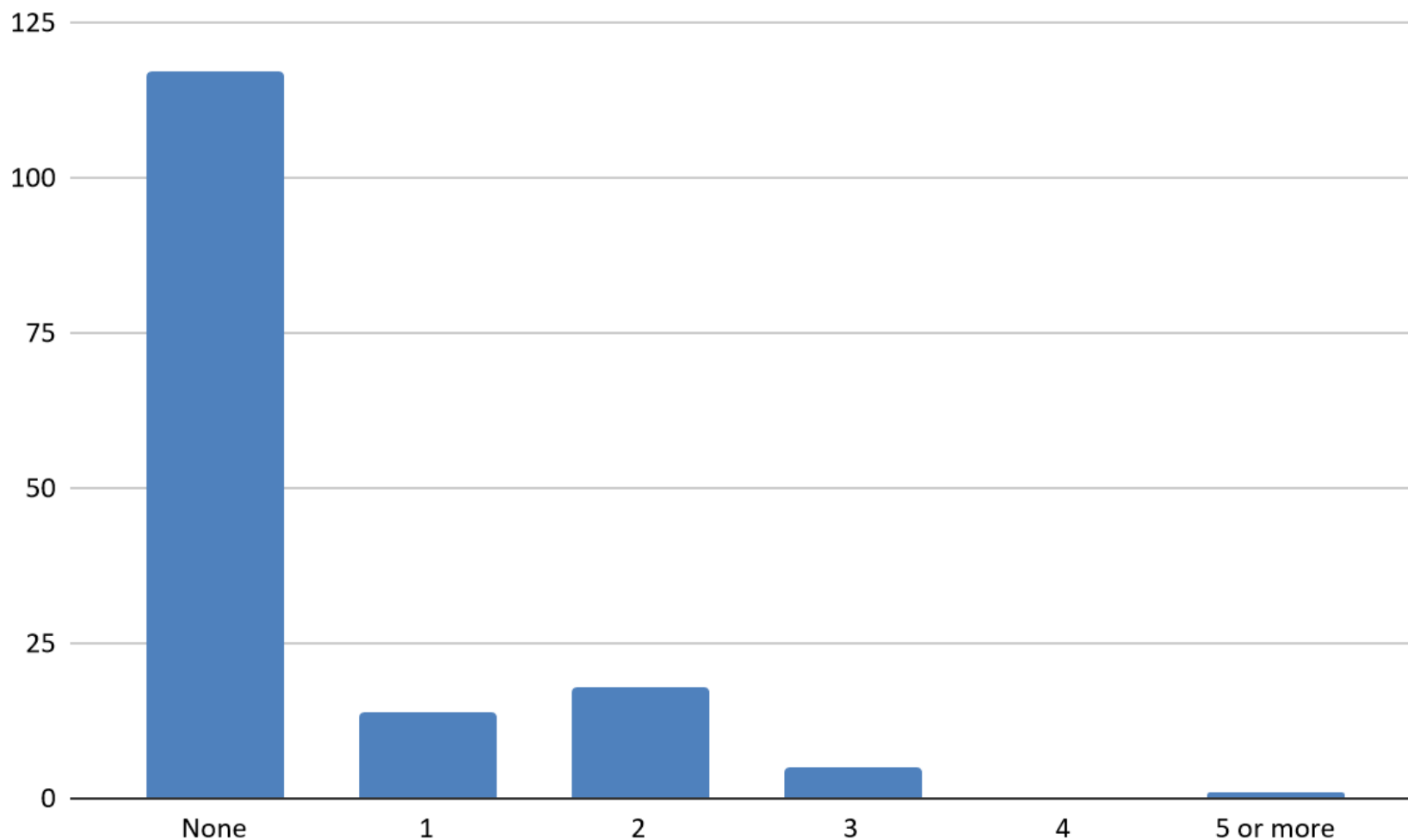
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# Highest level of formal education



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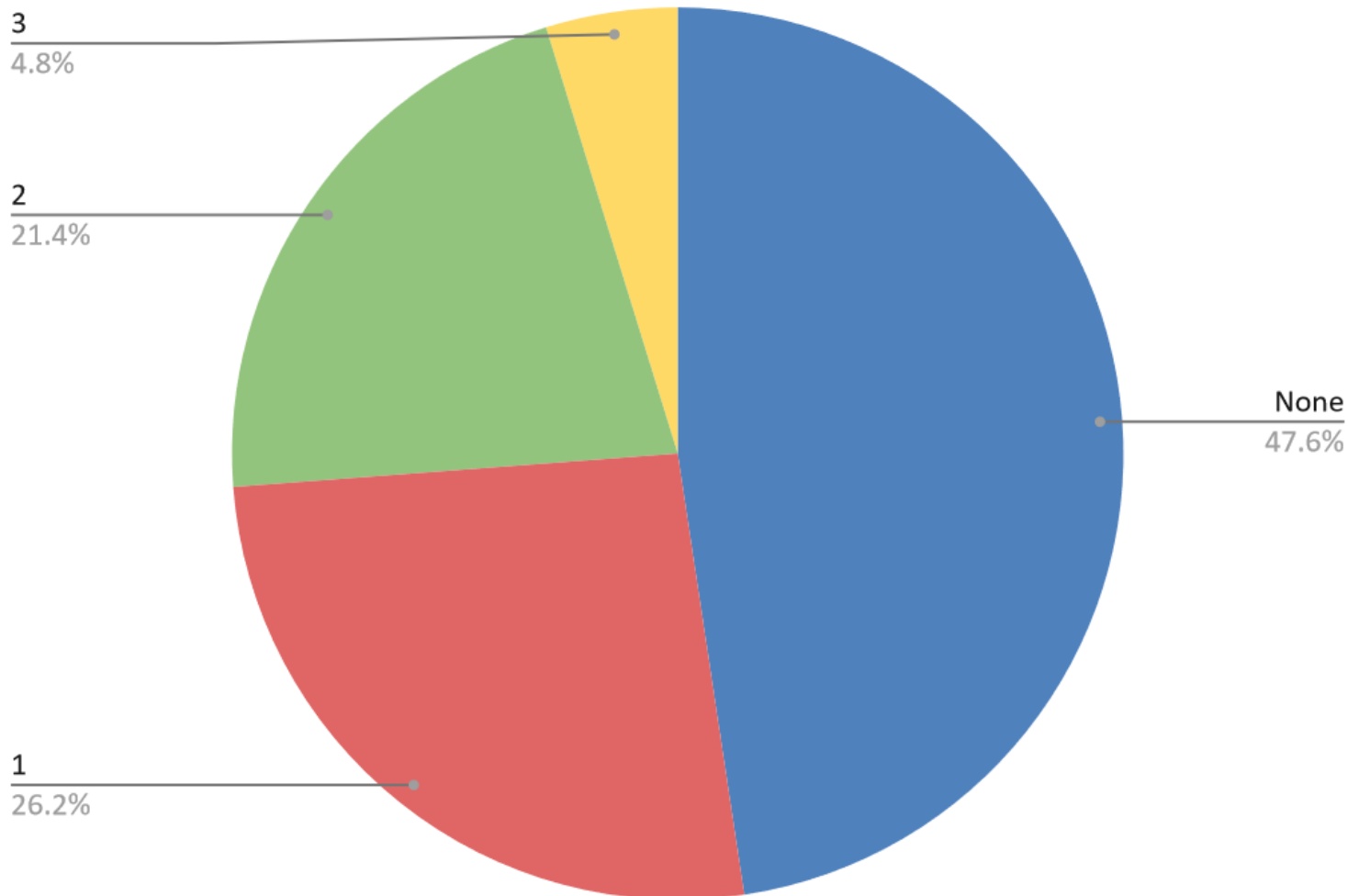
# Number of children under 18 in family



These numbers reflect those who responded to our survey, not necessarily the church as a whole.

# Children participating in RE

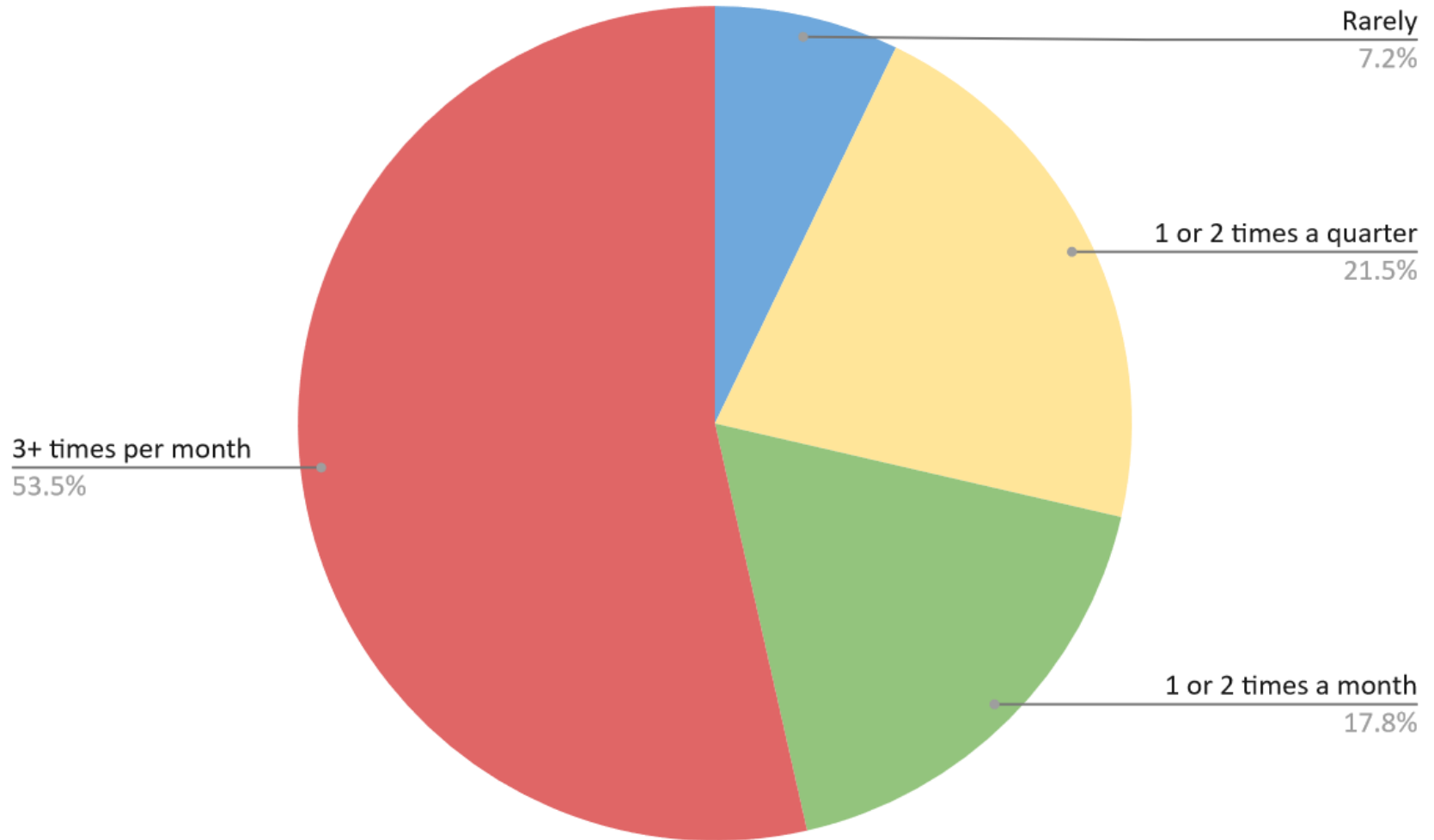
Of the families that have children under 18, how many have children in RE?



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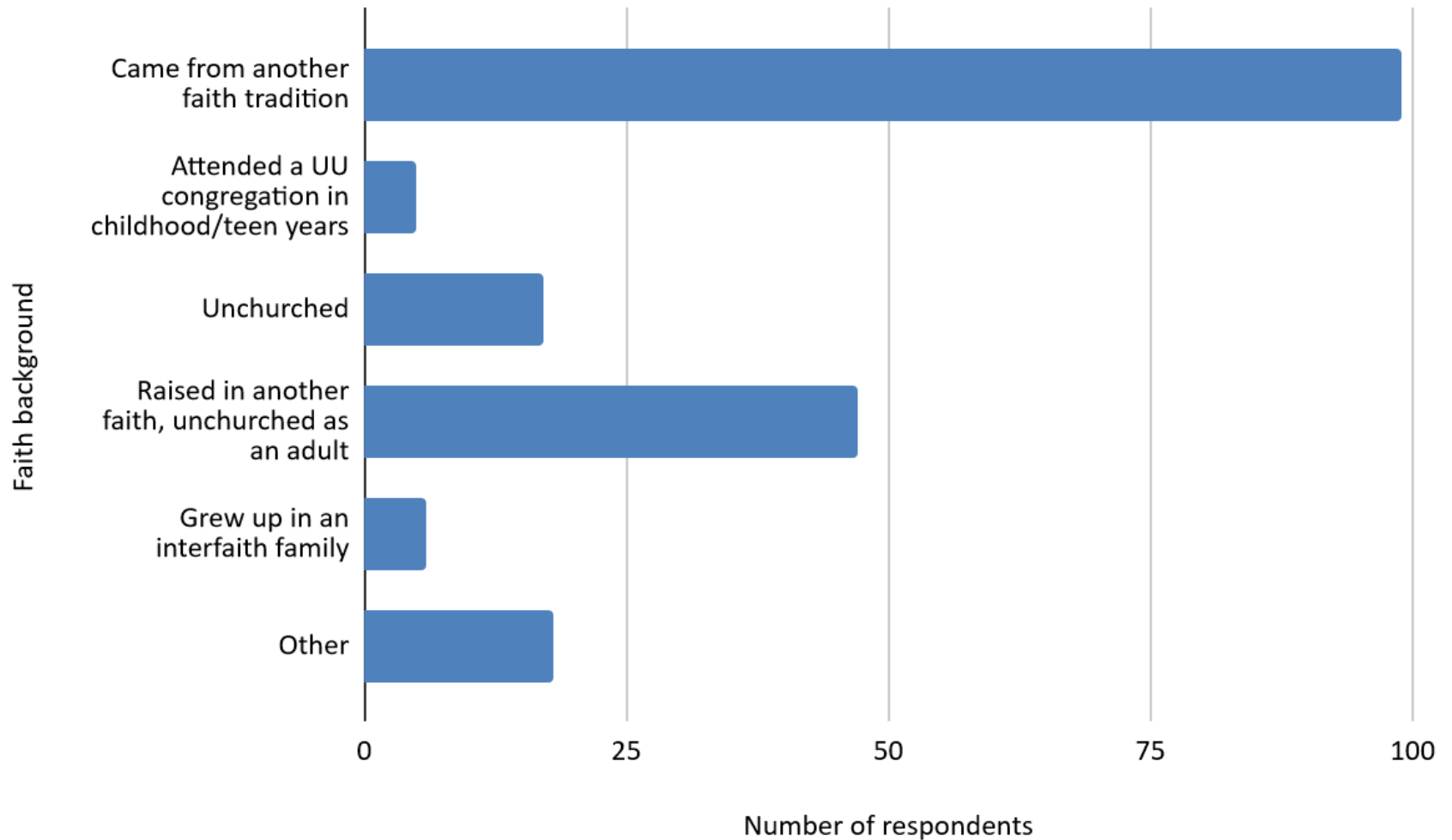
# Frequency of RE participation

In families whose children attend RE, how often do they attend?



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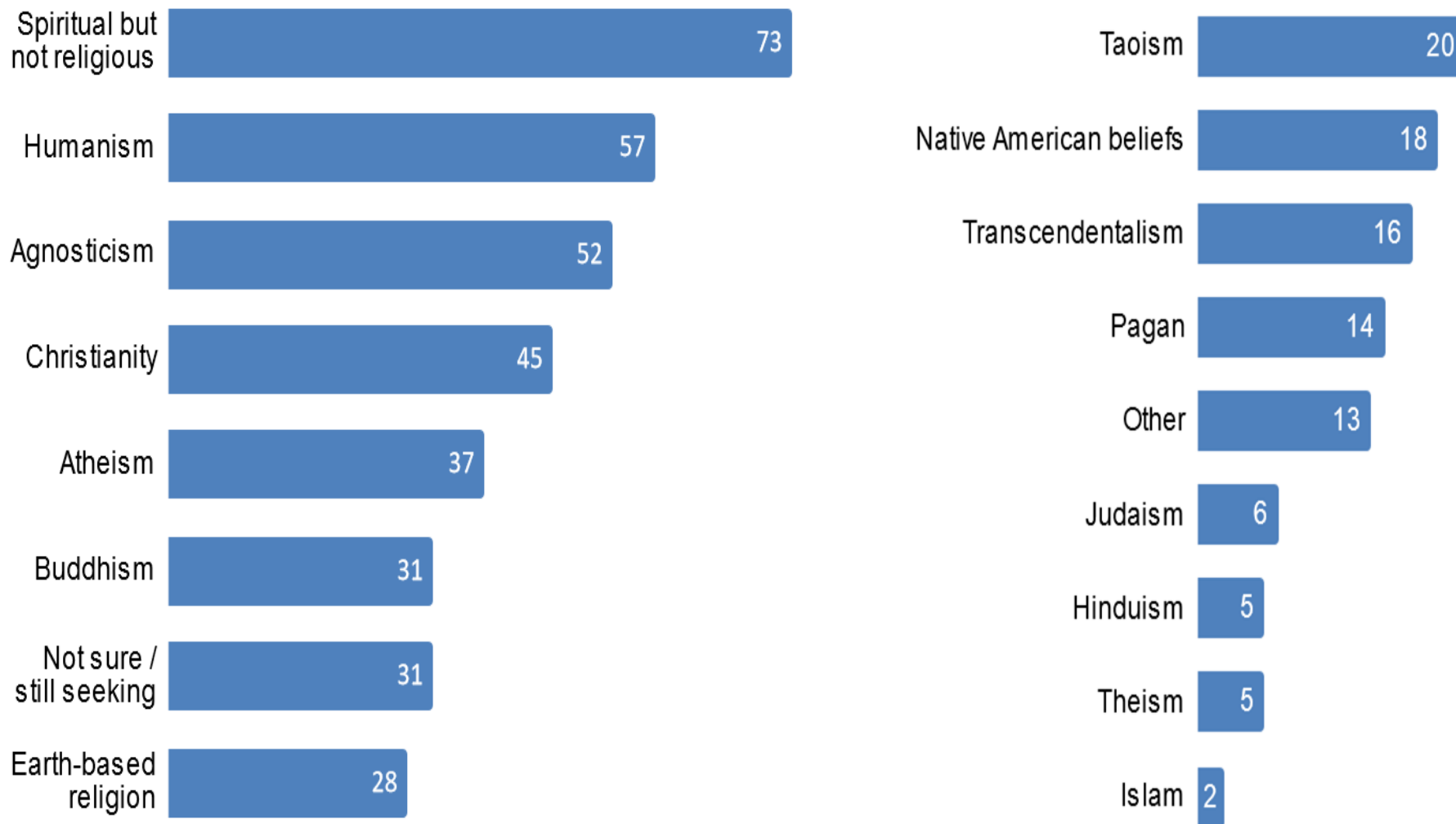
# Faith Background



These numbers reflect those who responded to our survey, not necessarily the church as a whole.



# Personal Beliefs

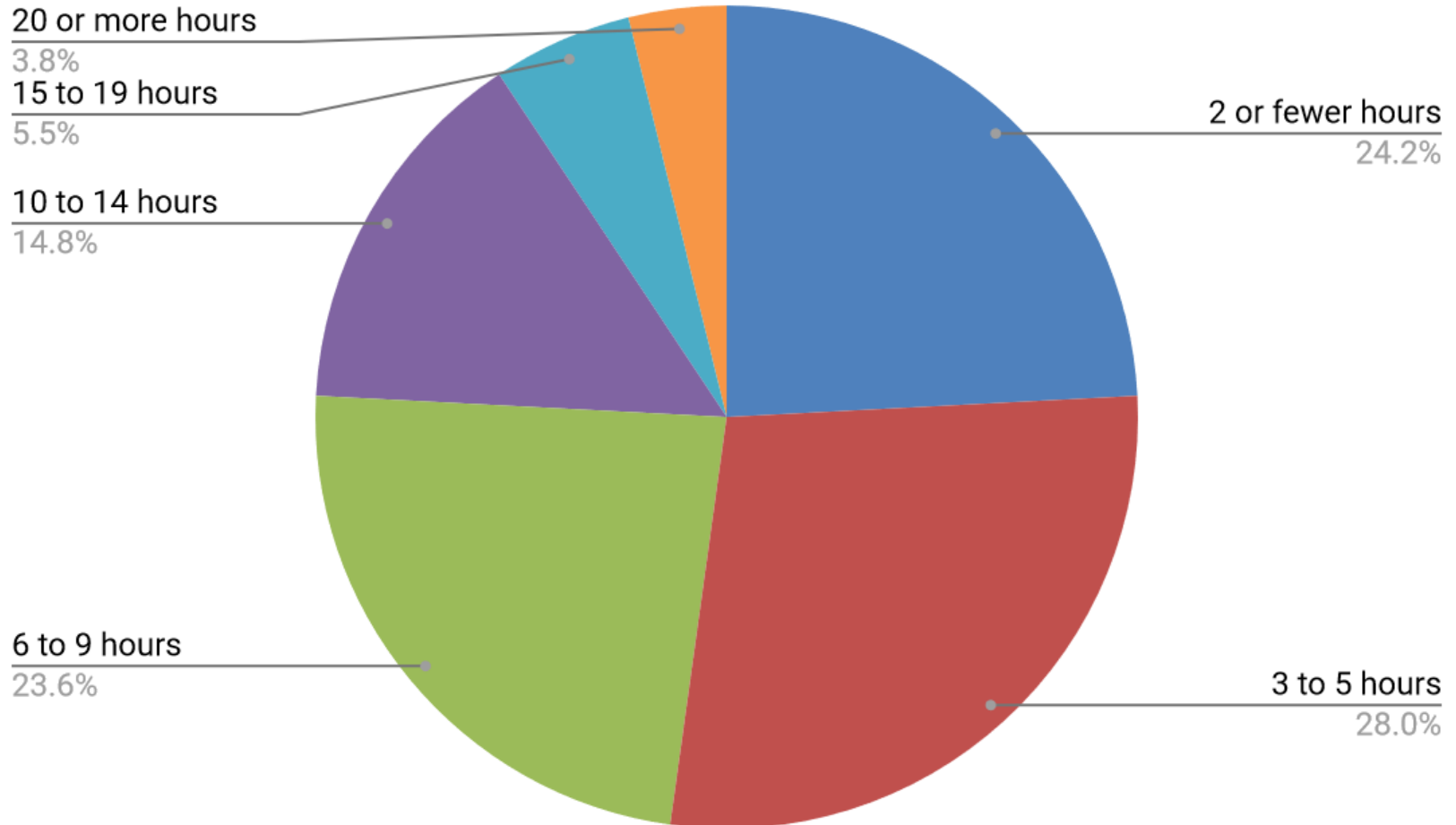


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# What Do We Think of Our Church?



# For how many hours per month, on average, do you participate in church activities?



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**47% of survey respondents said there had been a time when they were inactive in church.**

Here's why:

- Health Issues
- Schedule conflicts
- Family needs

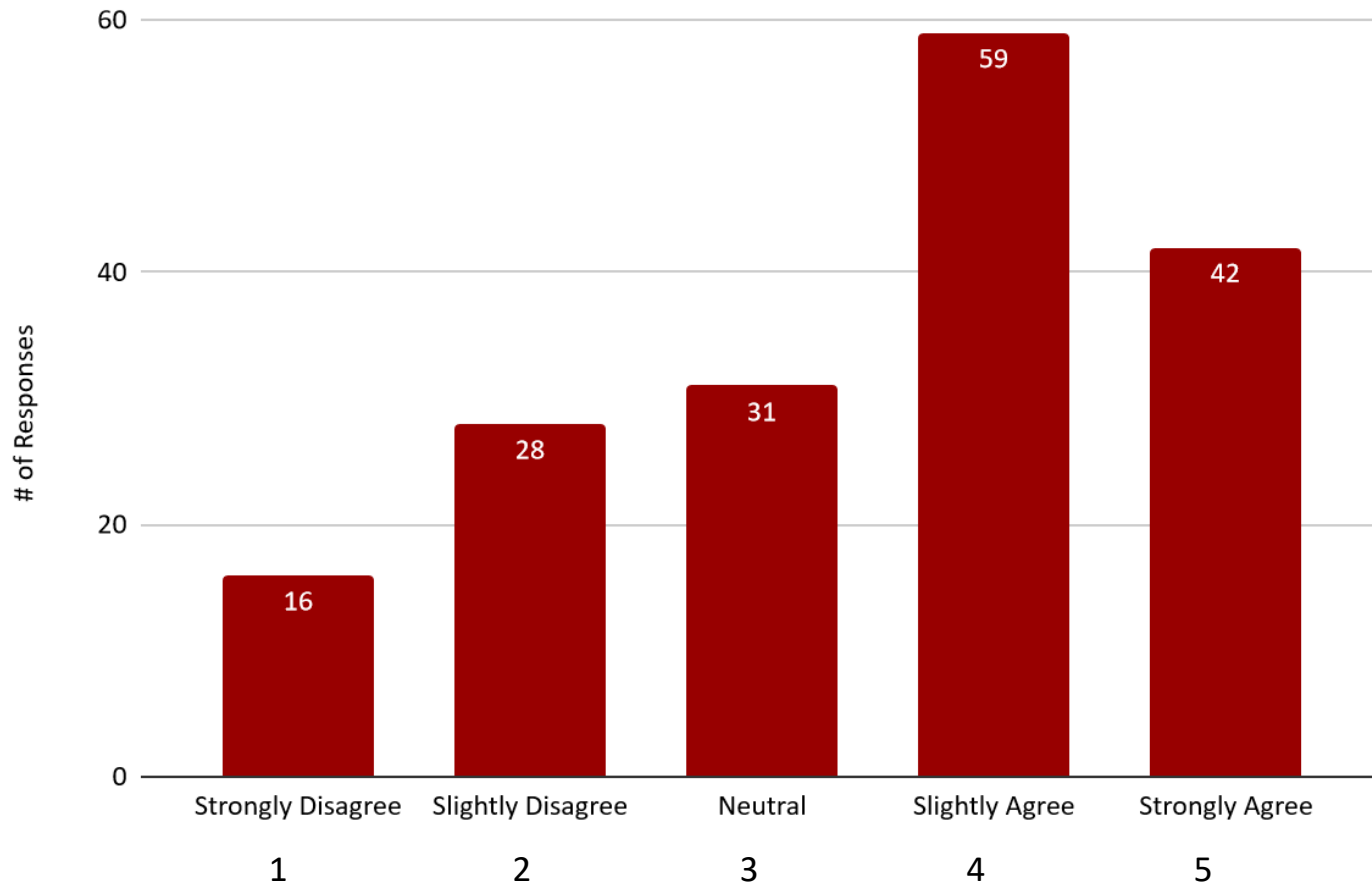
Less common answers included:

- Burnout with the demands of the church
- Conflict within the church
- Focus on more affluent members
- Sermons were not inspiring or thought-provoking

# How do we feel about the church?

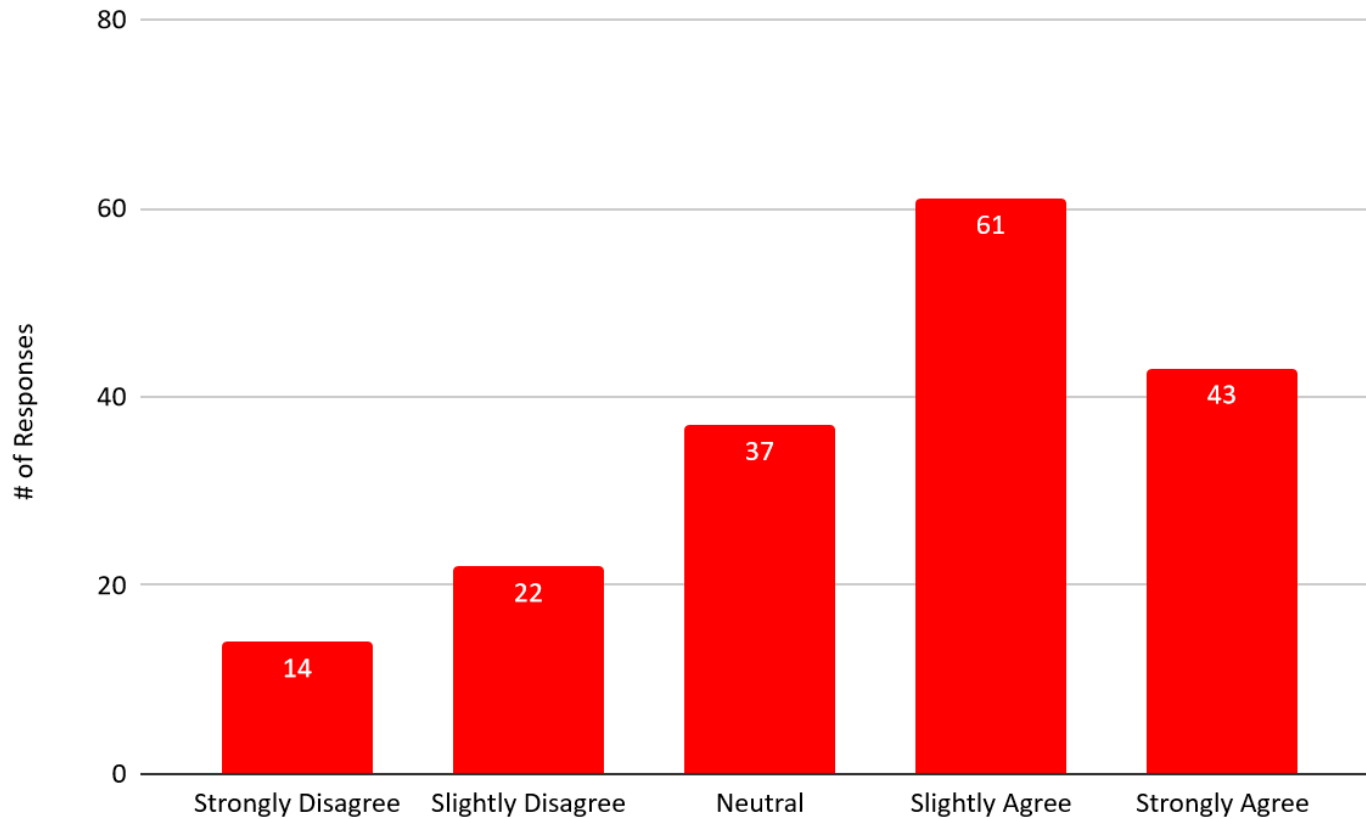
For the following nine statements, the weighted average is included. A weighted average closer to 3 indicates that we are either more neutral in our feelings, or we are very divided with approximately equal numbers on each end of the spectrum.

# This congregation is generally open to change.



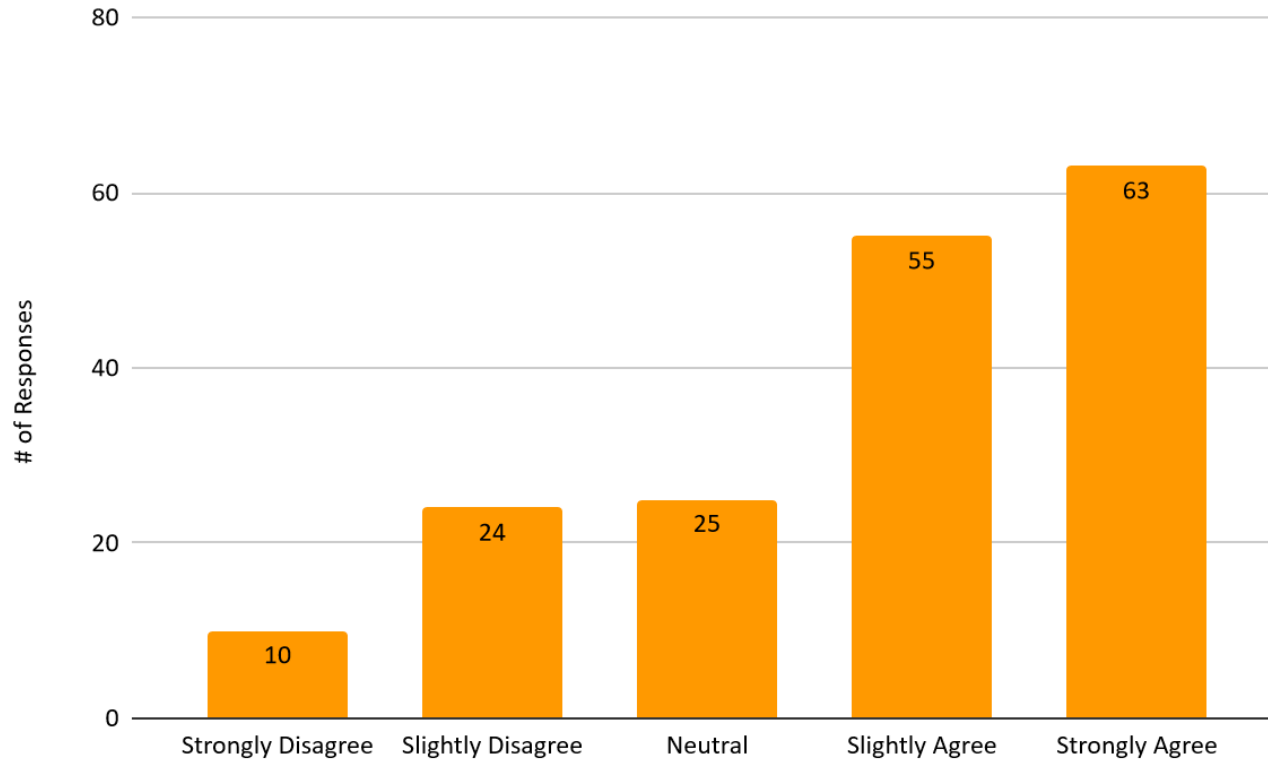
Weighted average – 3.47

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



Weighted average is 3.55

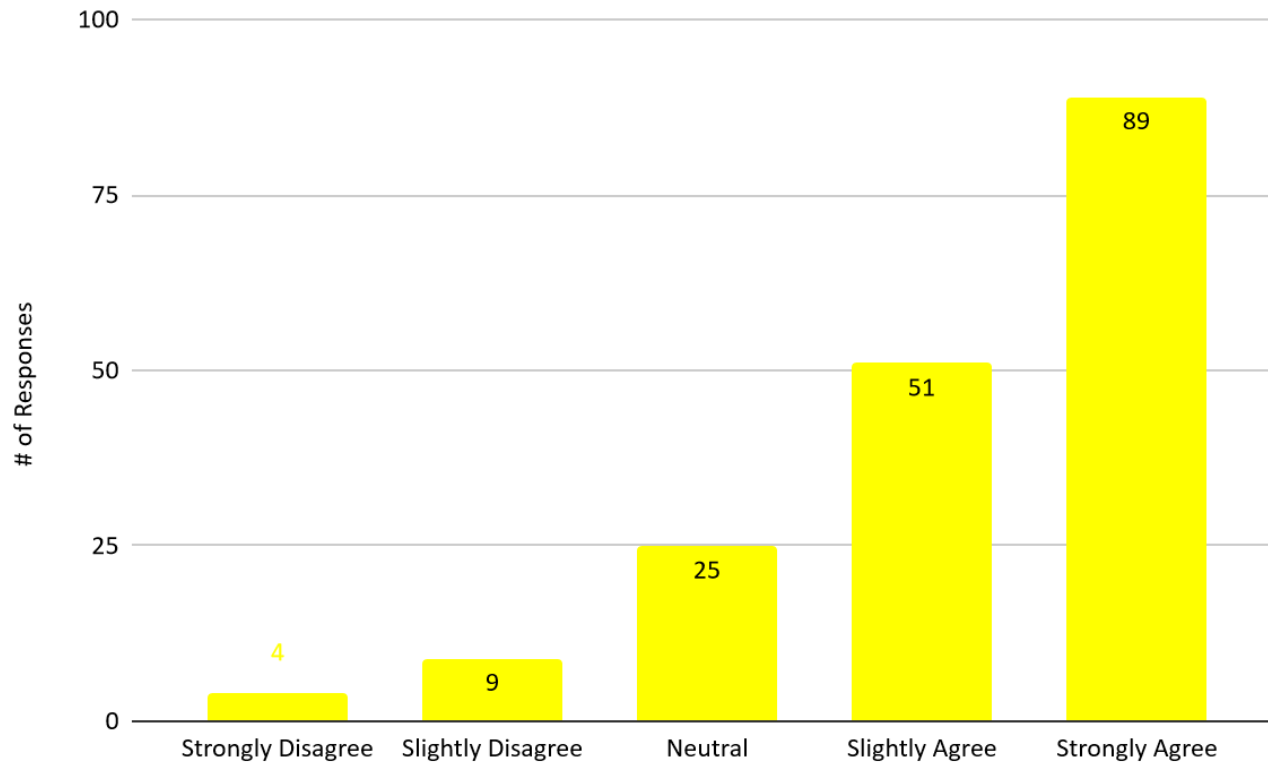
**This congregation focuses on our mission and the greater good,  
rather than the strong preference of some individuals.**



Weighted average is  
3.77

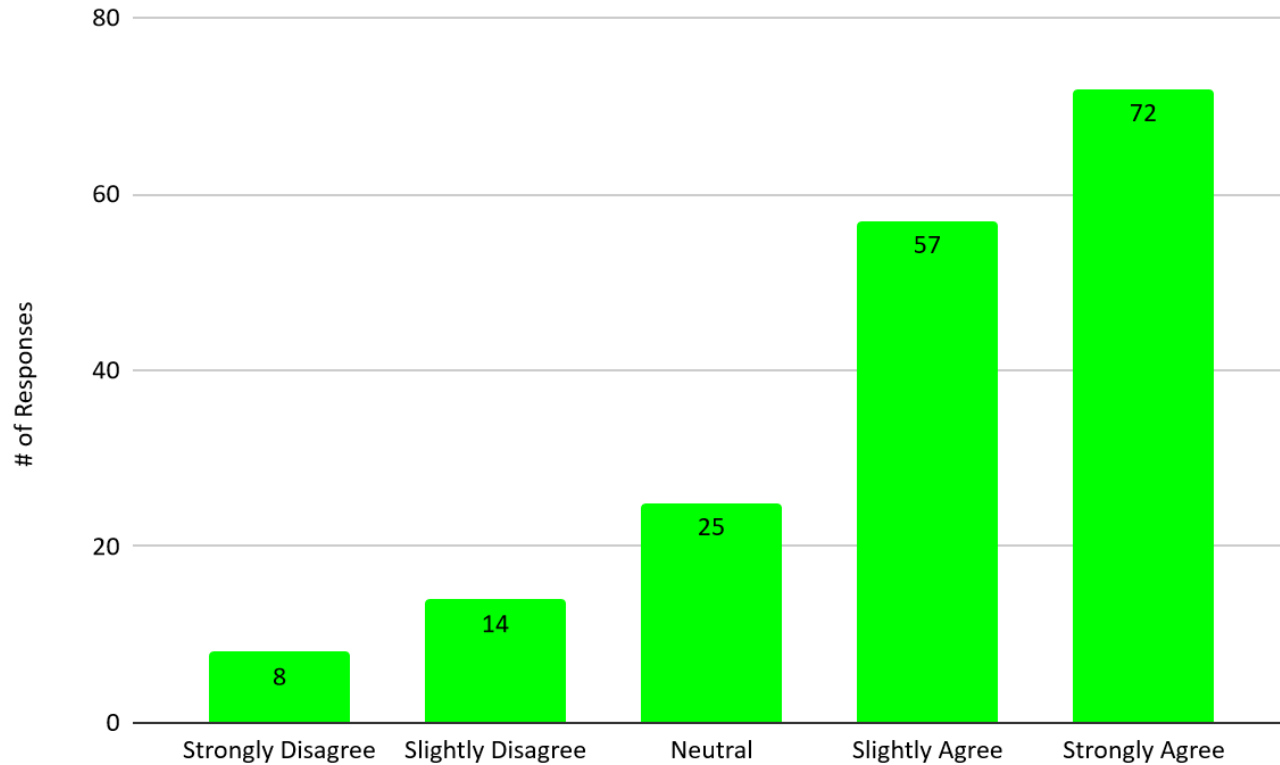


# I am confident in the congregation's financial stability.



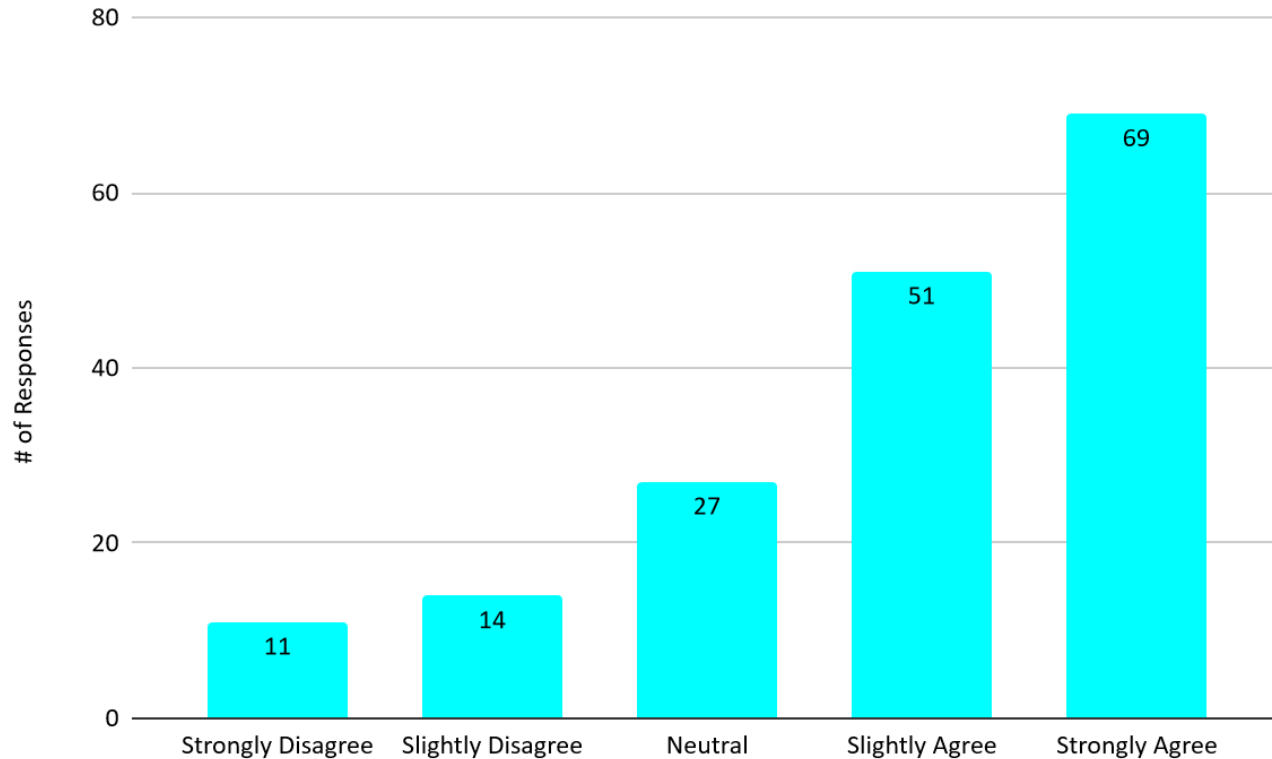
Weighted average is 4.19

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



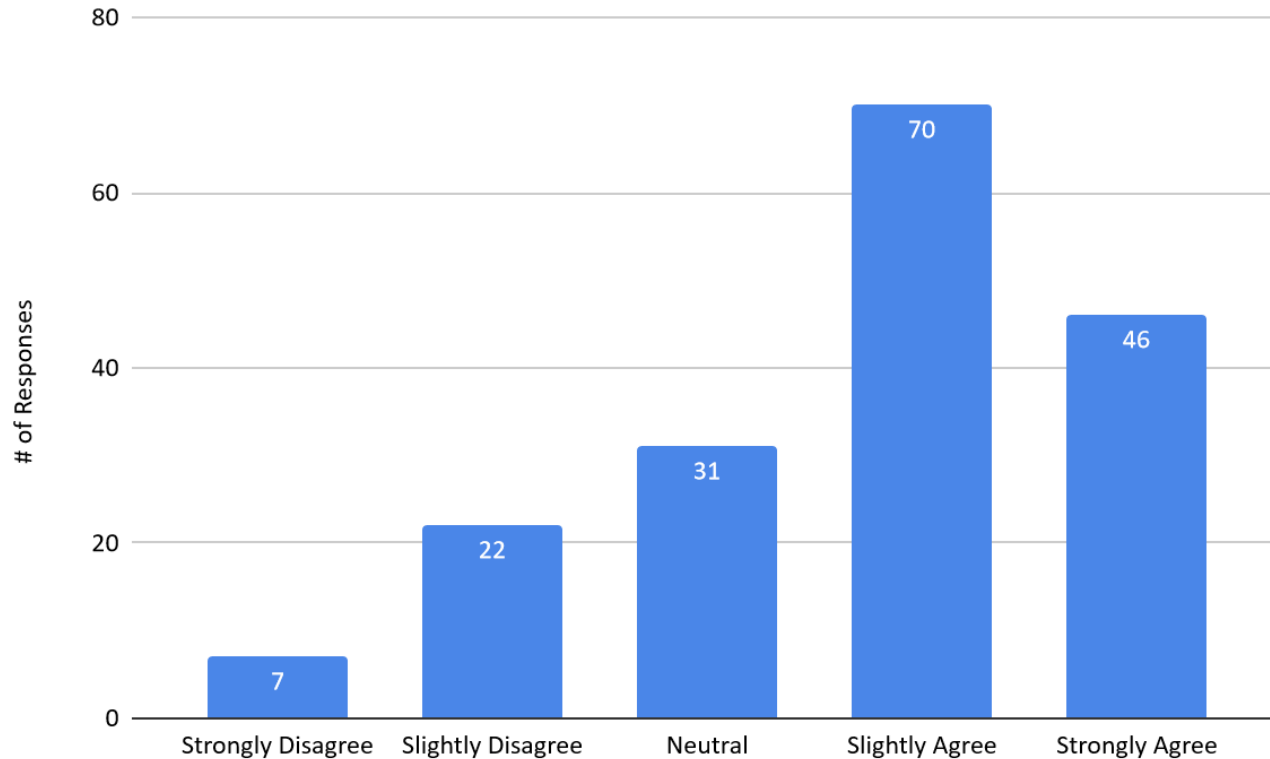
Weighted average is 3.97

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



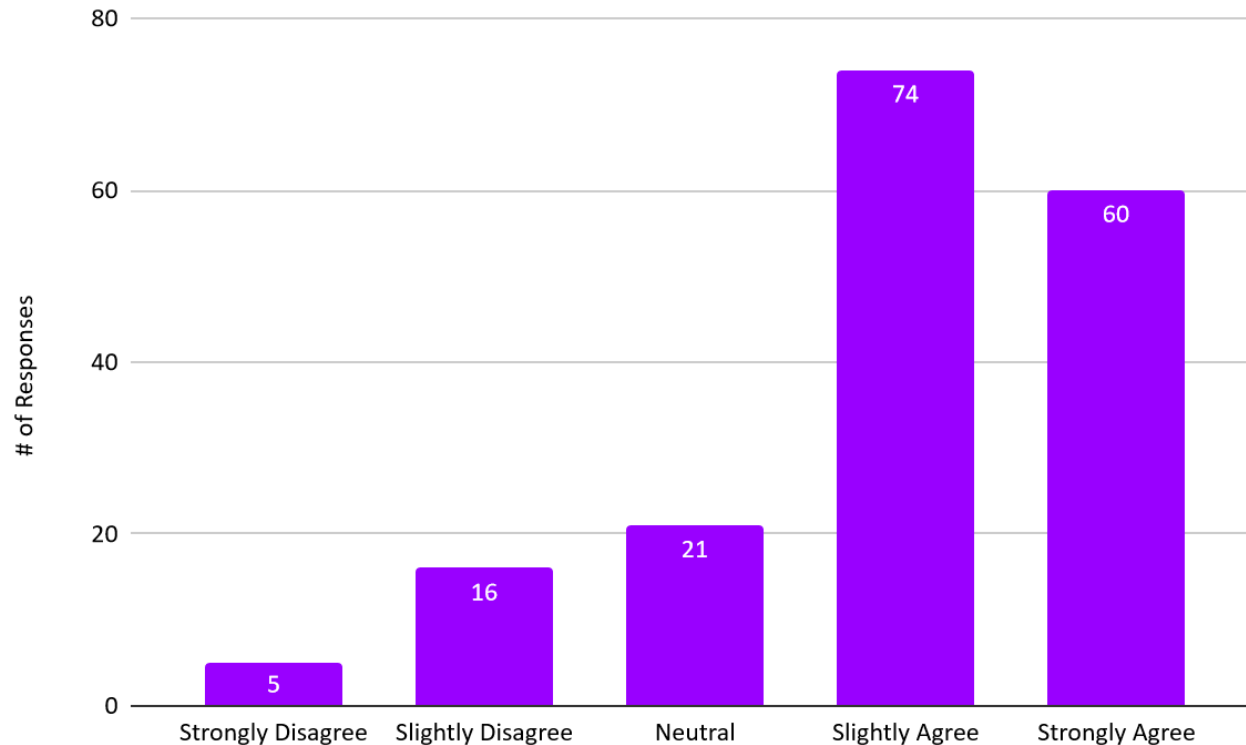
Weighted average is 3.89

# We do a good job of having difficult conversations and staying in relationship.



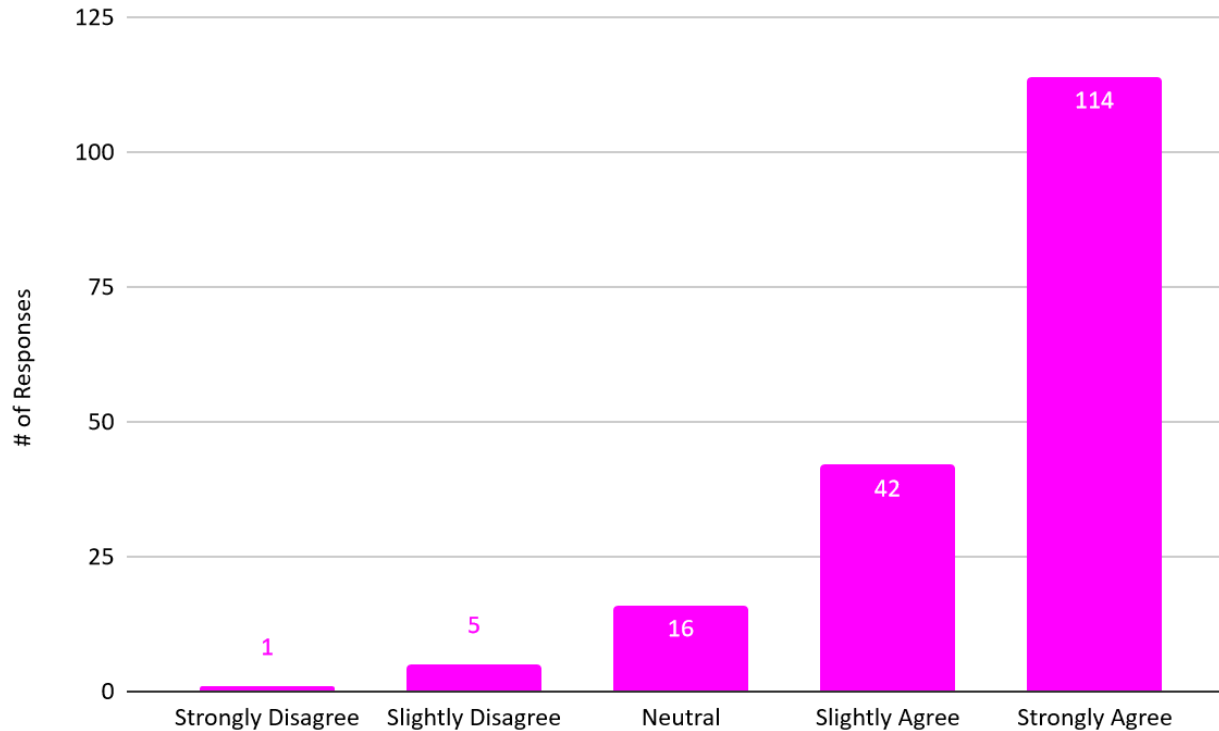
Weighted average is 3.72

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



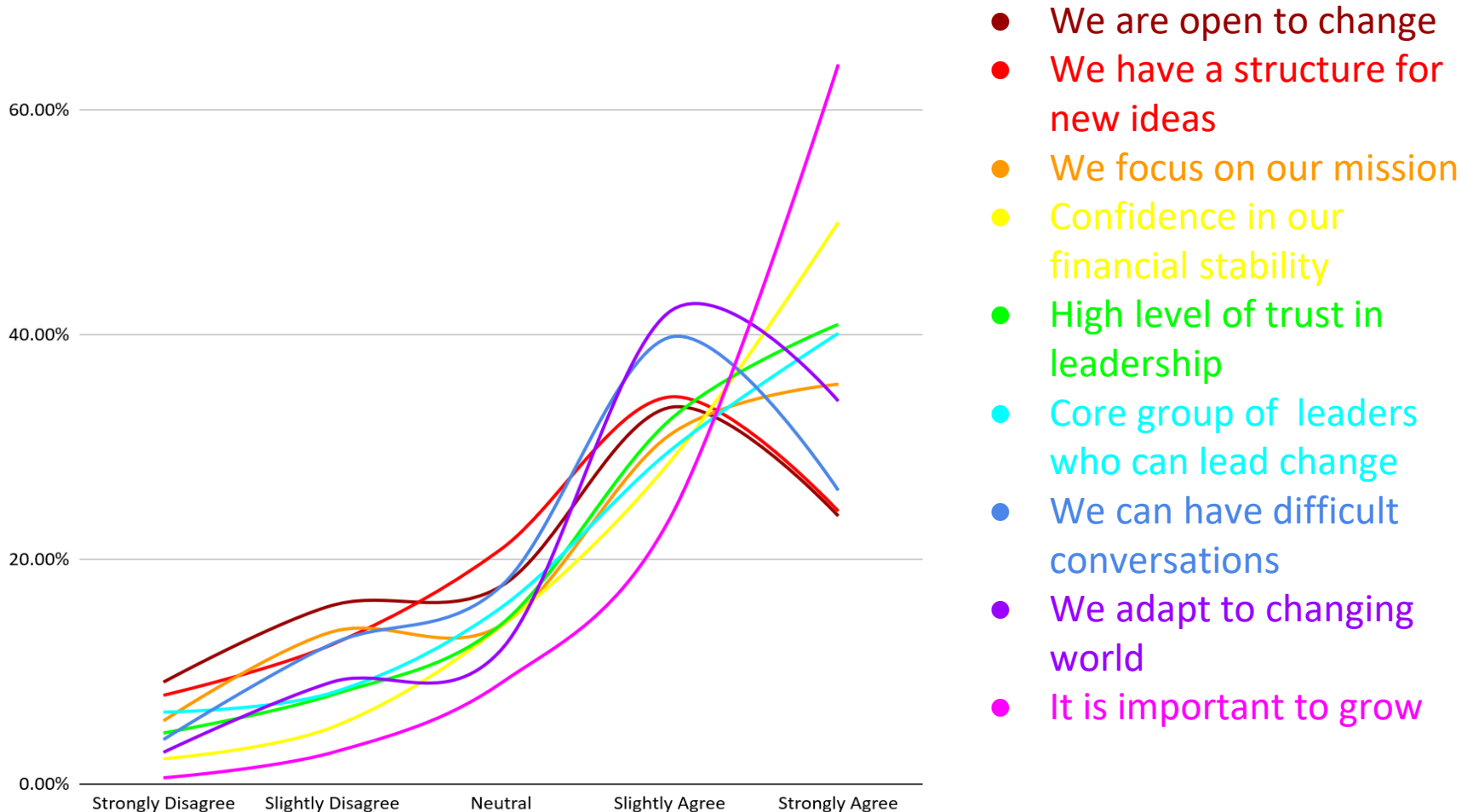
Weighted average is 3.95

# It's important that our congregation continues to grow.



Weighted average is 4.48

# How do we feel about our church?



Here are some of the conclusions we have reached based on your survey responses and cottage meeting and focus group suggestions.

Our church has many strengths, some areas we wish to improve, and topics that we have strong disagreement on.



## **The strengths of our church mentioned most often are:**

- We have many dedicated members and friends willing to share time, talents, and money.
- We have a welcoming space for learning and spirituality.
- We have excellent Religious Education programs for children and adults.
- We have a beautiful building and grounds – no mortgage.
- We are a safe place where views can be shared openly.
- We are financially strong and stable.
- We encourage and support community involvement.

## **Weaknesses or challenges :**

- Aging congregation – has potential impact on finances
- Better integration of children's activities with adults
- Maintaining or even increasing membership and financial well-being
- Continued care and upkeep of church building and grounds
- Greater awareness in community of who we are and what we have to offer

# Differing Opinions

Here are some topics that we heard opposite views on; in some cases, each side of an issue was expressed strongly.

We are a welcoming, inclusive church for all who come here

Sometimes not all people feel welcome

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UUs show up and are active in promoting social justice in our community

We are not active enough in our community/we are too focused on social justice

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It would be nice to add variety to our Sunday services

Our Sunday services are the best part of church and shouldn't change

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It is important to add more diversity in terms of race and LGBTQ+

We are who we are and those who like our message will join us regardless of identity

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This is a place where I feel spiritually supported and encouraged

I come here to make social connections and be in community with others

## **Things we want to grow or improve mentioned most often are:**

- Bridge perceived gap between children's RE and adults – “Front Church” and “Back Church” issues
- Debate and act on “tech needs” of the church, especially in the sanctuary
- Continue to grow our congregation--whether in age and racial diversity, total numbers, or even spiritually

**What Do We Want  
in Our Next Minister?**

## **This is what you said is important in a minister:**

- TRUST built through relationships with the congregation. This will be a process of learning each other and where changes will benefit everyone. This is a community.
- COMMUNICATION during the entire process of any big changes and improvement in communication in day-to-day operations.
- VISION of the direction for where we want to go and what we want to see in the future.

# **Other qualities you said are important in a minister:**

- Inspirational sermons – balance between teaching and meeting our spiritual and comforting needs
- Social justice advocate
- Give emphasis to children and youth needs
- Recognize importance of pastoral care
- Ability to lead the overall ministry
- Teach classes and adult workshops
- Provide visible leadership in Peoria community
- Enthusiasm / positivity
- Sense of humor
- Humility

**So, What's Next?**

**When do we meet our new  
minister?**



# **The Search Committee has more work first!**

- Review applicants and complete video interviews of top applicants
- Complete reference and background checks
- Travel to hear sermons of pre-candidates and complete additional interviews
- Make a tentative offer to our chosen candidate and make final arrangements for Candidating Week
- Present information to you, the congregation about our Candidate for Minister

# Candidating Week

**The Planned Candidating Week is April 26th - May 3rd**

April 26th- the Candidate will give the Sunday Sermon

April 27th-May 1st - There will be a number of opportunities for YOU to get to meet and chat with the candidate - coffees, committee meetings, social events

May 3rd - The Candidate will give another Sermon and then YOU will go into a Congregational Meeting and VOTE

If you overwhelmingly vote to call the Candidate - they will come back into the building and be welcomed as our new Minister!

BUT,  
What if the Search Committee  
does not present a Candidate  
or  
the Candidate is not approved?

The Minister Search Committee can only promise that we will choose, to the best of our ability, the candidate that does, in fact, FIT THE NEEDS OF OUR CONGREGATION.

If the best candidate in this round is not an excellent fit, the committee may present a candidate later in May/June, or may not present a candidate at all and a new search cycle will be initiated.

If the congregation does not confirm the Candidate, a new search cycle will be initiated.

The Search Committee wishes to thank everyone who contributed in any way to providing the support and the input we need to achieve the best possible outcome for our search.

