



Spirit Map

**Congregational Survey Report for
Unity Church-Unitarian
May 15, 2017**

Spirit Map and Ends Assessment Results

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Introduction to Spirit Map

“No one ever told us we had to study our lives, make of our lives a study, as if learning natural history or music, that we should begin with the simple exercises first and slowly go on trying the hard ones, practicing till strength and accuracy became one with the daring to leap into transcendence. . .”

—Adrienne Rich, *Transcendental Etude* (1977)

We begin this report of our 2017 congregational survey with our Spirit Map results. Spirit Map’s goal is to aid in the study of our lives, to help us determine what course of spiritual exercises and practices could help us “become one with the daring leap into transcendence.” In this Spirit Map report for our congregation, we outline our congregation’s:

- Signature Strengths, those survey items that are most true of our congregants and most important to them
- Key Opportunities, those survey items that our congregants see as important for their development
- Quadrant Map, with all 44 Spirit Map survey items plotted in strength and opportunity quadrants
- Drivers of spiritual maturity, those survey items most closely correlated with overall spiritual maturity in our congregation.

As you review this information, keep in mind that these items are meant to give you insight into the culture of spiritual maturity within our congregation. The goal is understanding, not judgment. There are no right or wrong results from this exercise, there are no judgments about the overall spiritual health of our congregation in comparison to other congregations.

We recommend you review these results first with an attitude of open curiosity, working to understand what it’s saying about our congregation and its spiritual strengths and opportunities. Then, go back through the results with an eye to how to apply the information. Pick one or two insights and consider how you might leverage them in our congregation’s programs and initiatives in the coming year. Assess the outcome, and then choose one or two insights to apply the following year. We find that a congregation’s Spirit Map results do not shift dramatically in a year, so you have time to gradually build on our congregation’s strengths and address its opportunities. Some questions to consider as you apply your insights:

- How could we make better use of our strengths in our programs and ministries, both current and new?
- What programs and ministries, both current and new, could address our opportunities?
- What could our strengths and opportunities mean for our worship services? What themes do they suggest we explore? What parts of our worship do we rely on more because they reflect our strengths? What aspects of our worship could we consider changing to help us better address our opportunities together?

Again, there are no right answers to these questions. Each congregation is unique. If you steadily work to apply the insights of Spirit Map to leverage our strengths and address our opportunities, you should be ever more effective at developing our congregation's sense of spiritual growth and development.

Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities

When we analyze how our congregants answered the survey questions (see *How We Determine Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities* on page 17), we find these five statements identify our congregation's Signature Strengths:

- I act with integrity.
- I care deeply about the welfare of others.
- I believe it matters what I do.
- I seek opportunities to learn and grow.
- I take responsibility for the consequences of my actions, even those that are unintended.

And these five statements identify our congregation's Key Opportunities:

- I give to others fully and generously.
- I'm able to adapt when things do not turn out the way I want.
- I see beauty all around me.
- I can be in the presence of my own or another's pain without needing to flee or fix it.
- I make good decisions about when to act.

More Information on Our Signature Strengths

Our congregation's Signature Strengths represent those elements of the congregation's shared spiritual life whose combination of higher average importance and higher average self-assessment ratings provide the bedrock of its spiritual maturity and identity. As you review our congregation's Signature Strengths, consider:

- How are these Signature Strengths reflected in the congregation's culture and history?
- How could we shift existing programs and ministries to better take advantage of our Signature Strengths?
- What new programs and opportunities would best take advantage of our Signature Strengths?
- How could we use our strengths to help newcomers find us and understand who we are?
- How could we use our strengths to communicate who we are when we're in search of new ministerial leadership?

Here's some additional information about each item, from an individual perspective, to help you consider what they might mean in the life of our congregants:

I act with integrity.

To have this Signature Strength is to know the values that guide your life and to know you align your actions with those values. Acting in alignment with deeply held values requires courage, particularly when the values you hold call you to counter-cultural behavior that others might call naïve, or find threatening. To leverage this item as your Signature Strength, incorporate reflection on your acts of integrity into your spiritual practice. What values called you to those actions? How might you more fully embody those values in your life? Are there some values you are less likely to live out than others? How might you let them speak in your life?

I care deeply about the welfare of others.

To have this Signature Strength is to know the power of human connection. We humans are neurologically built for connection to one another; it's essential to our healthy survival. As Howard Thurman said, "... our need to respond to [another's] need to be cared for is one with our concern to be cared for ourselves." Finding human connection through your care for the welfare of others softens your heart, opening it to others and to the holy. To leverage this as your Signature Strength, choose spiritual practice that connects you with others, reflect on how that connection opens your heart, and consider how to carry your softened heart into other areas of your spiritual life.

I believe it matters what I do.

To have this Signature Strength is to place a practice of hope and faith at the foundation of your spiritual life. Despite not knowing what, if any, outcome your actions will produce, you choose to situate yourself in the present moment, conscious of the past, looking to the future, and finding a way forward that matters. This practice of hope and faith can inform and develop all aspects of your spiritual life. In particular, consider how your belief that it matters what you do can help you develop your Key Opportunities. If you have faith that what you do to respond to your Key Opportunities will matter, what might that lead you to try?

I seek opportunities to learn and grow.

Having this Signature Strength gives you lifelong learning as a practice of spiritual growth. As the Quaker Douglas Steere said, "God is always revising our boundaries outward." This is not growth and learning as a form of mastery, but rather as a posture of humility and understanding that we are all "in progress." Leverage this strength to help you find and connect more deeply with the sacred in yourself, in others and in the universe. Choose opportunities for learning and growth that connect with your

Key Opportunities, that would best allow you to open your heart to new understanding and ways of being in those areas of your spiritual life you particularly want to grow.

I take responsibility for the consequences of my actions, even those that are unintended.

Having this Signature Strength means you're able to acknowledge the interconnectedness of all things. Through your recognition that intention does not always equal impact, you're able to see and connect with the whole, broadening and deepening your view of creation and your place in it. You can leverage this Signature Strength in your spiritual practice, taking as your object of contemplation the interconnected whole of creation, and considering what that vision of the whole suggests for further development of your Key Opportunities.

More Information on Our Key Opportunities

Our congregation's Key Opportunities represent those elements of the congregation's shared spiritual life whose combination of higher average importance and lower average self-assessment ratings provides high potential areas for spiritual growth and development. These are items that the congregation itself identified, on average, as being relatively more important in their lives and relatively less true of them, which suggests that work to enhance those areas would be welcome and fruitful.

- What would it mean for our congregation to develop in the areas our Key Opportunities identify? How would it change the congregation and its culture?
- What spiritual practices, programs, and initiatives might help the congregation deepen its spiritual life in these areas?
- How could the congregation's Signature Strengths help it to develop its Key Opportunity areas further?

Here's some additional information about each item, from an individual perspective, to help you consider what they might mean in the life of our congregants:

I give to others fully and generously.

This Key Opportunity opens you to the redemptive power of love acting in the world. It's offering you the opportunity for spiritual practice to pay forward the hospitality and generosity that have been given to you in so many forms throughout your life and weave a tapestry of love together in community. This is an opportunity to practice vulnerability as well, offering your gifts without regard to an even exchange, offering your gifts even when you're unsure if they're good enough or even welcome. Choose spiritual practice such as tithing, volunteering, or offering hospitality in your home or other settings that invites generous action and reflection on the experience. What do you learn about generosity to others that will help you develop it more fully?

I'm able to adapt when things do not turn out the way I want.

This Key Opportunity invites improvisation into your life. The key phrase in improvisation is “Yes, and. . .,” saying “Yes,” to acknowledge an unexpected and sometimes unwanted turn of events, and still finding a way to respond to it authentically and creatively. Choose a spiritual practice that develops your ability to respond to the unexpected or the unwanted, asking what it has to teach you and what new parts of yourself might emerge as you engage with it. Do something you’ve never done before to knock yourself off balance and reflect on what you’ve learned. Consider how to work with the unexpected instead of trying to control it.

I see beauty all around me.

To see this item as one of your Key Opportunities is to long for a better balance between the light and shadow in your life. While you may know deeply the pain and suffering in the world, and may even have cultivated the spiritual ability to be with it without fleeing or fixing it, your opportunity here is to balance your perspective, seeing the beauty and wonder of life even in the midst of brokenness. This is not about false optimism or blind cheerfulness, not about ignoring the shadow side, but is instead about recognizing the beauty that still surrounds everything, allowing that beauty to nourish and sustain you. Consider a practice of expressing daily gratitude for the beauty of the world until you can see and act on it intentionally.

I can be in the presence of my own or another's pain without needing to flee or fix it.

This Key Opportunity encourages you to stay awake, open and spiritually resilient in the face of the suffering in your own life and in the world. This is not a call to fix others’ suffering but to be present to it. As Parker Palmer says, “The human soul does not want to be advised or fixed or saved.” Choose spiritual practices that increase awareness and compassion so that you’re better able to offer your grounded presence, to yourself or to someone else who’s suffering, even as you know you cannot control or end that suffering. The Buddhist practice of tonglen meditation works to develop this awareness, compassion, and grounding.

I make good decisions about when to act.

This Key Opportunity asks you to come into alignment with the natural course things want to take. Guided by neither urgency nor passivity, it invites you to find the way, as Martin Buber puts it, to “Listen to the course of being in the world. . . and bring it to reality as it desires.” Choose spiritual practice to help you develop the patience and the discernment to be, in the words of the Tao, the Master who “takes action by letting things take their course.”

Our Congregation's Quadrant Map

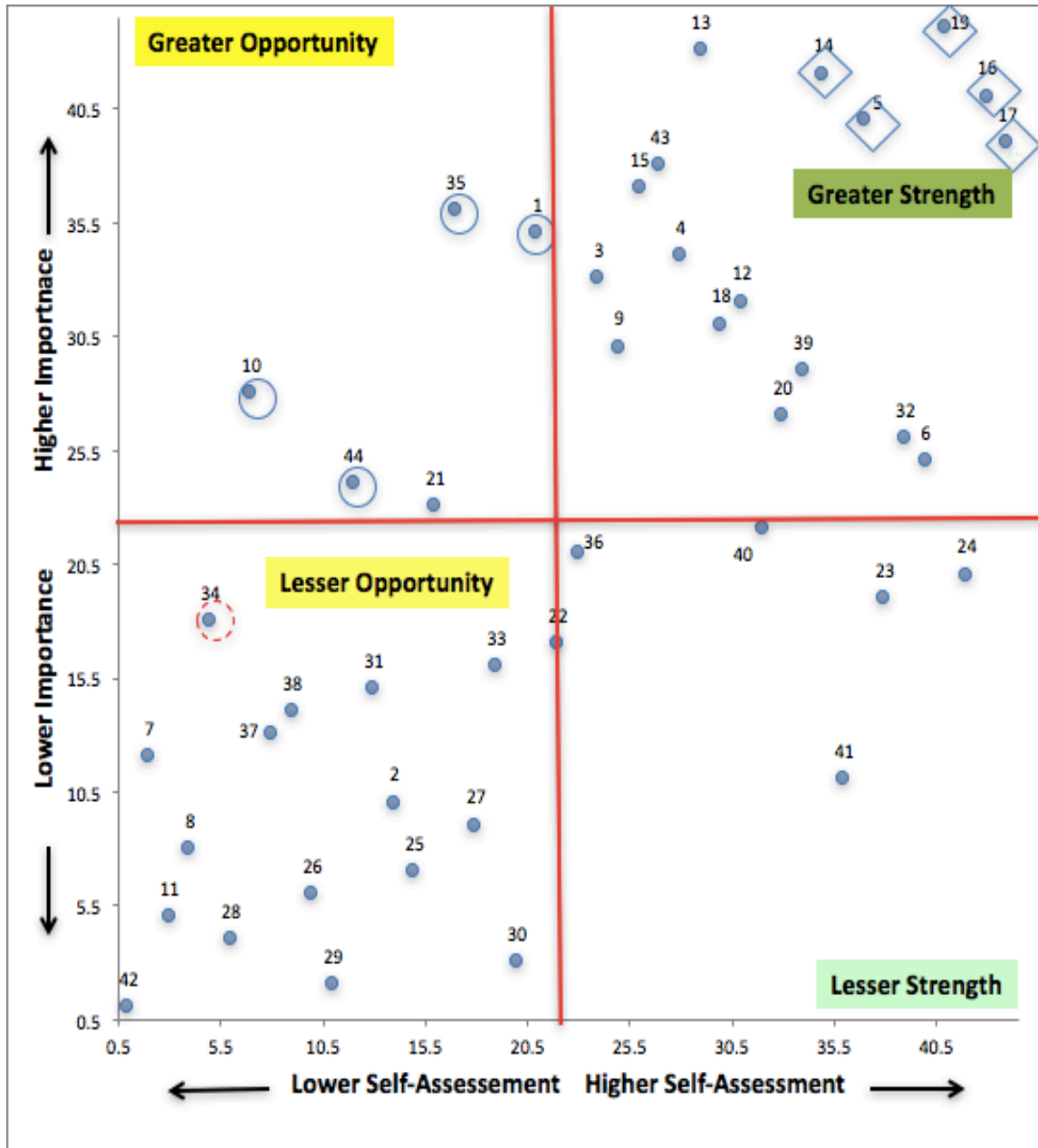
A visualization of our congregation's strengths and opportunities

While you can certainly understand and deepen our congregation's shared spiritual life through its Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities, you may want a more complete and nuanced picture of how the items in the Spirit Map survey combined for our congregation. The Quadrant Map on the next page gives that more complete picture. On the pages following our Quadrant Map, we take you on a journey through it.

To locate the 44 survey items on the Quadrant Map, we:

1. Calculate each item's average self-assessment
2. Assign each item a self-assessment rank order number from 1 (lowest average rating) to 44 (highest average rating).
3. Repeat the first two steps for each item's importance rating.
4. Plot each item on the Quadrant Map according to their two rank order numbers (self-assessment and importance).

Quadrant Map



Key Opportunities ○
Signature Strengths ◇

Center of the Red Cross-Hairs

Let's begin our journey at the center of our map, where the two red cross-hair lines meet. If you travel:

- North: you find the 22 items with the highest average importance
- South: you find the 22 items with the lowest average importance
- East: you find the 22 items with the highest average self-assessment
- West: you find the 22 items with the lowest average self-assessment

Overall Pattern

Our congregation's survey items have a fairly linear distribution in the Quadrant Map (the correlation between self-assessment and importance ratings averages is 0.66, where 1.00 would be perfect correlation and 0.40 is the correlation for individuals). This means that our people, on average, give higher self-assessments to items they find important and lower self-assessments to items they do not find to be important. This probably means that the congregation as a whole sees itself living in alignment with its spiritual priorities, which in many respects is a positive outcome. As you review our congregation's strengths and opportunities, think about what implications you see for our congregation in that alignment. What spiritual culture does this create? Are there ways in which the congregation's spiritual life could grow, if its alignment is examined or challenged?

Greater Strength Quadrant

From the cross-hair center, let's travel north and east, into the Greater Strength quadrant. The items in this quadrant are the items that our congregants said, on average, are relatively more important in their spiritual life and relatively more true of them. Notice that we've put diamonds around our congregation's Signature Strengths. The chart below lists all the items in our congregation's Greater Strength Quadrant. We've listed them in priority order; see our method to determine that order in the section on page 38 called *How We Determine Our Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities*.

Item #	Greater Strength Quadrant Item	Signature Strength (SS)
19	I act with integrity.	SS
16	I care deeply about the welfare of others.	SS
17	I believe it matters what I do.	SS
5	I seek opportunities to learn and grow.	SS
14	I take responsibility for the consequences of my actions, even those	SS

	that are unintended.	
13	I am respectful of the feelings, actions, and opinions of others	
43	I believe my life has meaning and purpose.	
32	I am curious to learn more about how the world around me works.	
6	Leading a moral life makes me happy.	
12	I am reflective.	
39	I experience awe.	
15	I act in an authentic manner.	
4	I feel part of something larger than myself.	
18	I act with the interests of others in mind.	
20	I am self-aware.	
3	I delight in experiences both great and small	
9	I seek harmony with others.	

As you look at where these items are located in the Greater Strength Quadrant, notice which ones are located near our Signature Strength items. Which of those items do you consider equally part of our congregation's spiritual identity, and worthy of adding to our modified list of Signature Strengths? One possibility to consider:

- #13, because of its high importance and fairly high self-assessment averages: I am respectful of the feelings, actions, and opinions of others

Greater Opportunity Quadrant

Now, from the Greater Strength Quadrant, let's travel west, into the quadrant that represent the items that our congregation said are, on average, relatively more important in their spiritual life and relatively less true of them. Notice that we've put circles around our Key Opportunities. We've listed all items in this quadrant in priority order in the table below; see our method to determine that order in the section on page 38 called *How We Determine Our Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities*.

Item #	Greater Opportunity Quadrant Item	Key Opportunity (KO)
10	I give to others fully and generously.	KO
44	I can be in the presence of my own or another's pain without needing to flee or fix it.	KO
21	I freely and intentionally give my time and energy to others.	
35	I'm able to adapt when things do not turn out the way I want.	KO
1	I see beauty all around me.	KO

As you look at where these items are located in the Greater Opportunity Quadrant, you'll notice that item #21, "I freely and intentionally give my time and energy to others" is located near our Key Opportunity items. If you consider this item as equally worthy of our attention and practice as our Key Opportunities, you'll want to add it to our modified list of Key Opportunities.

Lesser Opportunity Quadrant

Like many congregations, not all of our Key Opportunities are located in our Greater Opportunity Quadrant. You need to travel south from the Greater Opportunity Quadrant, into the Lesser Opportunity quadrant, to find the last of our congregation’s Key Opportunities, circled in red. Our congregants gave this item, on average, lower importance and lower self-assessment ratings, but our Key Opportunity algorithm finds that their combination of self-assessment and importance means you may also want to consider it as part of our congregation’s Key Opportunity set. Our congregation’s “red circle” item:

- #34: I make good decisions about when to act.

As you look at where our “red circle” item is located in this quadrant, notice whether any additional items are nearby. Which of those items do you consider as equally worthy of our congregation’s attention and practice as its Key Opportunities? You’ll want to add those items to our congregation’s modified list of Key Opportunities. Some possibilities to consider:

- #7: I have a clear purpose to my life and am able to articulate that purpose to both myself and others.
- #37: I have the ability to repent, forgive myself, and change.
- #38: I can ask for and accept forgiveness.
- #31: I act with awareness of my place in the interconnected web of existence.

We’ve listed all items in this quadrant in priority order in the table below; see our method to determine that order in the section on page 38 called *How We Determine Our Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities*.

Item #	Lesser Opportunity Quadrant Item	Key Opportunity (KO)
34	I make good decisions about when to act.	KO
7	I have a clear purpose to my life and am able to articulate that purpose to both myself and others.	
38	I can ask for and accept forgiveness.	
37	I have the ability to repent, forgive myself, and change.	
31	I act with awareness of my place in the interconnected web of existence.	
33	I can tell the difference between what I am responsible for, and what I do not control.	
22	I am mindful of my emotions.	

8	I actively practice my spiritual or religious faith.	
2	I think about my place in the universe.	
27	Even though I cannot know exactly what will happen, the promises I make give shape to my future and meaning to my life.	
11	I act in a spiritual manner.	
26	Having good boundaries allows me to act with intention.	
25	Awareness of my mortality informs how I live my life.	
28	I perceive and respond to truth that is expressed in myth or poetry.	
30	I am aware of some of the limitations or paradoxes of my own preferred religious vocabulary.	
29	I appreciate the beauty and power of religious symbols and rituals other than my own.	
42	I act in a religious manner.	

Lesser Strength Quadrant

Finally, we'll travel east from the Lesser Opportunity Quadrant to end our journey in the Lesser Strength Quadrant. The items in this quadrant are, on average, relatively more true of our congregants, but because they are, on average, relatively less important to our congregants, you will most likely find they play a lesser role in defining our congregation's spiritual identity than items in the Greater Strength quadrant. However, if any of these items are located near our congregation's Signature Strengths, or if you find an item here that you feel actually is a strong part of our congregation's spiritual identity, you may wish to add it to our congregation's modified list of Signature Strengths. We've listed all items in this quadrant in priority order in the table below; see our method to determine that order in the section on page 38 called *How We Determine Our Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities*.

Item #	Lesser Strength Quadrant Item
24	I accept ambiguity as inherent in life.
23	I see something universal in all human struggle.
40	I am able to exercise power without corruption.
36	My spiritual growth is important to me.
41	I can give loyalty to another's leadership without losing my integrity.

Should We Focus on Signature Strengths or Key Opportunities?

Like so many things in the spiritual life, this is not an either/or but a both/and. We designed Spirit Map to help congregations cultivate opportunities to develop the congregation's spiritual life, in areas it would welcome development, using the strengths it already has available to it. Our congregation's Signature Strengths help you focus on the qualities that are most important to our congregants and in which they already feel confident. They represent our congregation's spiritual identity, the items our congregation can reliably expand and build. Our congregation's Key Opportunities help you prioritize and focus the congregation's spiritual development on items that are most important to it, but about which the congregation felt less confident. Used in combination, you have a powerful road map to initiate, develop and enhance the ministries of the church.

This is especially true when Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities represent different aspects of the same quality of spiritual maturity. For example, our congregation could leverage the Signature Strengths:

- I believe it matters what I do.
- I take responsibility for the consequences of my actions, even those that are unintended.

to develop our Key Opportunity:

- I make good decisions about when to act.

Since congregants already believe that action matters and are able to take responsibility for the consequences of those actions, you can build opportunities for people to more clearly identify and lean into their decisions and actions. Sermons can talk about how to align actions with values, programs can build in opportunities to, as Martin Buber puts it, "Listen to the course of being in the world. . .and bring it to reality as it desires." Ministries can balance the urgency of action with the patience of discernment. All in service of building the congregation's ability, as individuals and together, to "take action by letting things take their course."

Or, as another example, you could leverage our Signature Strength:

- I care deeply about the welfare of others

to develop our Key Opportunity:

- I give to others fully and generously.

Overall Rating of Spiritual Maturity (SM)

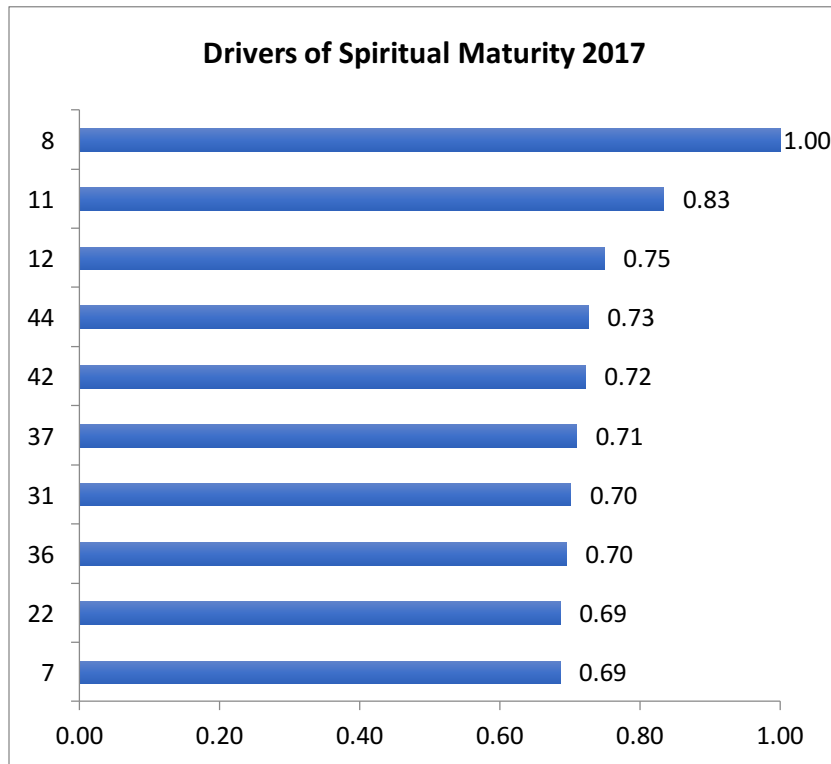
Following the self-assessment and importance ratings of the survey's 44 items, we asked our congregants two questions about their overall level of maturity. The chart below has their average responses:

Question	Rating	Rating Scale
Assess your overall level of spiritual maturity now	6.5	1 to 10
Project your overall level of spiritual maturity in five years	7.5	1 to 10

Drivers of Spiritual Maturity

In this section, we look at the relationship between our congregants' self-assessment ratings on the 44 Spirit Map items and their ratings of their overall spiritual maturity now—a rating we haven't used yet. We're interested in what self-assessment ratings are most strongly correlated with the ratings of overall spiritual maturity. In other words, when people rate themselves high on overall spiritual maturity, what other items do they also rate highly? And when people rate themselves lower on overall spiritual maturity, which items do they rate themselves lower on as well? Looking at these correlations gives us another glimpse into our congregation's culture of spirituality, and can suggest items to focus on in our ministries, because working on enhancing the self-assessment ratings on these highly correlated items might lead to higher levels of overall spiritual maturity, although we have to bear in mind that just because an item is correlated with higher spiritual maturity does not necessarily mean it causes it.

On the next page, you'll find our top ten drivers along with their association indices. The item with the maximum correlation with overall spiritual maturity has an index of 100; other numbers represent the ratio of an item's correlation to that of the item with the max correlation.



Item #	Item	Relative correlation with overall spiritual maturity 100 = strongest correlation
8	I actively practice my spiritual or religious faith.	100
11	I act in a spiritual manner.	83
12	I am reflective.	75
44	I can be in the presence of my own or another's pain without needing to flee or fix it.	73
42	I act in a religious manner.	72
37	I have the ability to repent, forgive myself, and change.	71
31	I act with awareness of my place in the interconnected web of existence.	70
36	My spiritual growth is important to me.	70
22	I am mindful of my emotions.	69
7	I have a clear purpose to my life and am able to articulate that purpose to both myself and others.	69

You'll no doubt notice that our drivers are quite different from our Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities. In fact, many of our top drivers are rated very low on importance by the congregation as a whole. This means you have some interesting choices to make. Do you challenge the congregation to consider these items as more important? Or, do you work on these items more subtly, opening up the meaning of these driver items for the congregation so that it feels more interested in and capable of working on them over time?

You may be wondering whether to rely on Signature Strengths or invest time to develop Key Opportunities that did not show up as Drivers of Spiritual Maturity. The short answer is: yes, you should, because our congregation told you those items were important to them. There are reasons an item's self-assessment rating may not mathematically correlate with overall spiritual maturity; working on those items is still valuable when our congregation says they're important.

You might also wonder how much weight to give the Drivers of Spiritual Maturity if the congregation did not identify them as important. You'll need some discernment to answer that question. What might it mean that some items, particularly these three:

- I actively practice my spiritual or religious faith.
- I act in a spiritual manner.
- I act in a religious manner.

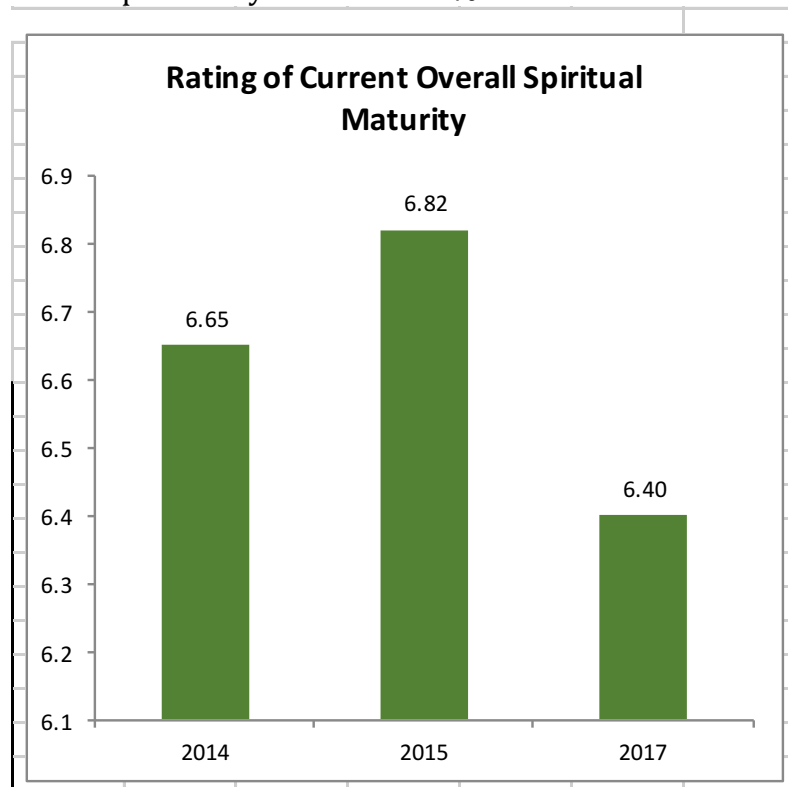
are drivers of spiritual maturity, but people state that there are many items more important in their spiritual lives? What might result from a focus on these items? How will it affect our congregation's culture of spirituality to work on these drivers? Will you want the outcomes that work might produce?

Tracking Spirit Map Data Over Time

Our congregation’s Spirit Map assessments are lower in 2017 than in either 2014 or 2015. You can see this in the average ratings of overall spiritual maturity and average self-assessment of the 44 Spirit Map survey items. These ratings are about us as individuals and our personal spiritual lives. They might be seen as an indirect indicator of the church’s success at a mission of spiritual transformation and you might be concerned about them dropping. We believe, however, these lower ratings are a function of the state of the world rather than a reflection of church performance. See page 21 and the section *Key Ends Findings*.

Overall Spiritual Maturity Ratings Over Time

We ask people to rate their current overall spiritual maturity on a scale of 1-10. The 2017 average is statistically different from the two previous years at the 95% level of confidence.

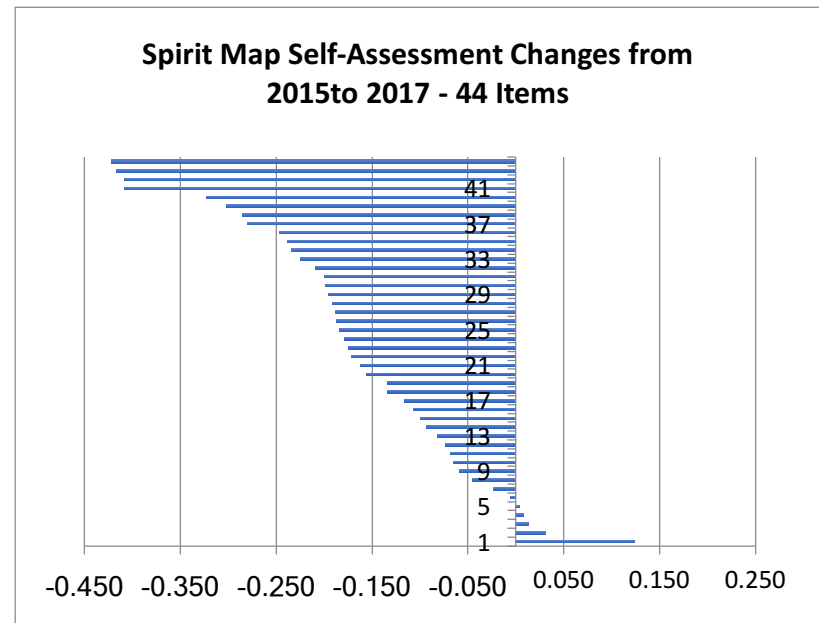
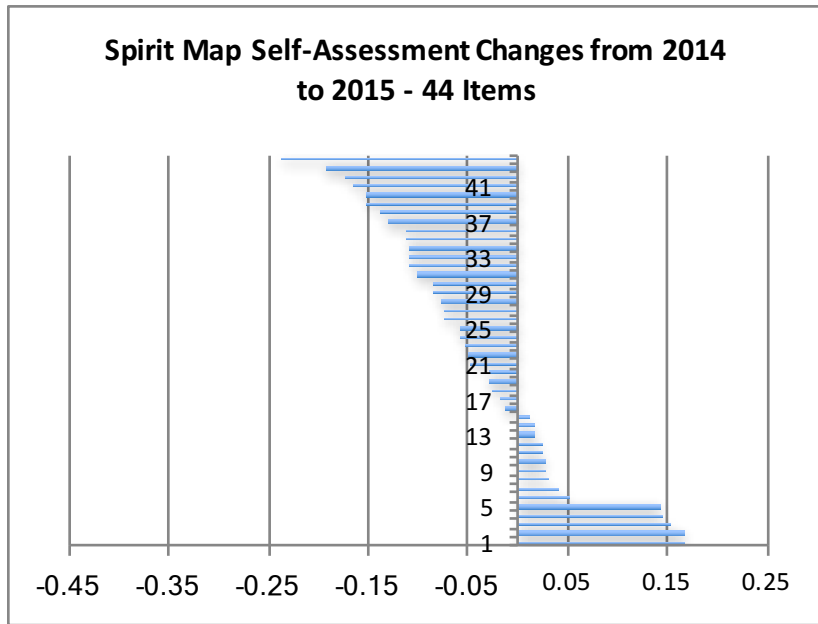


Self-Assessment Ratings Over Time

Spirit Map self-assessment ratings (how true is this item for me?) are the first things asked in the 2014, 2015, and 2017 surveys (they weren't asked in 2016), so changes in these ratings would not be due to methodological reasons.

Changes in self-assessment ratings from 2014 to 2015 are relatively small. Some are negative, some are positive, and they average in absolute terms 0.086.

Changes in self-assessment ratings from 2015 to 2017 are almost all negative (higher ratings in 2015 than 2017) and they average in absolute terms (0.170) two times larger than the changes from 2014 to 2015.



Ends Assessment

Now we turn from the Spirit Map results to the results from the ends assessment survey section.

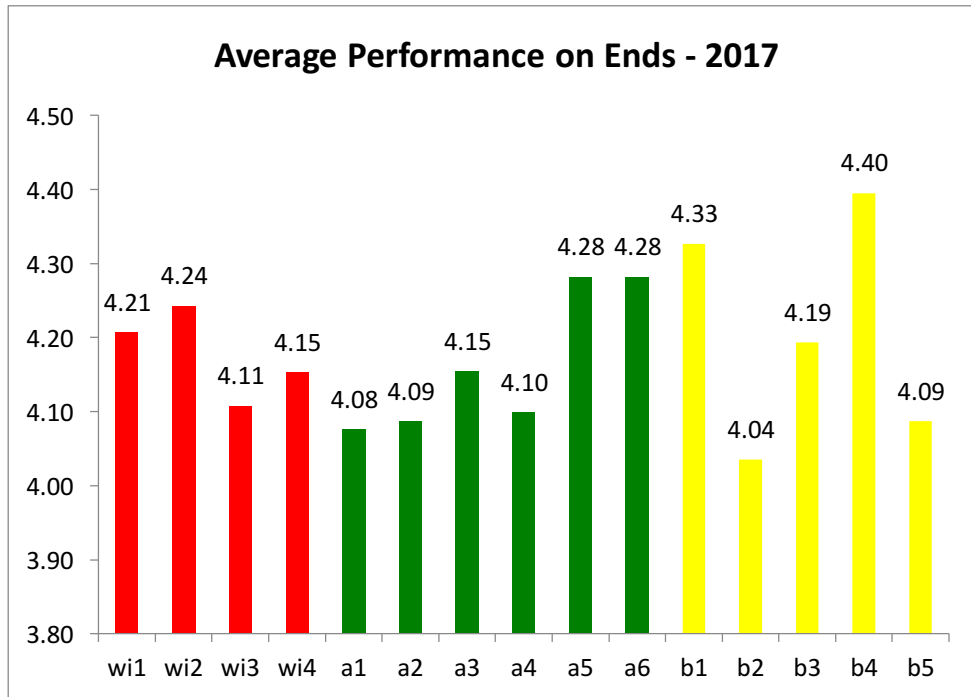
Key Ends Findings

Three key findings from this year's ends assessment:

1. **New pattern for Within, Among, and Beyond.** For the first time since we began tracking, respondents rated our beyond ends higher than both our within and among ends. We have not seen this pattern ever before. Usually, respondents rate our within ends highest, followed by our among ends, with our beyond ends rated lowest. You'll also see that the average score on the set of beyond ends has been steadily rising since 2014, whereas the average score on the set of within ends and among ends has stayed fairly flat (except for 2016).
2. **Lower scores.** Almost all ends ratings have dropped since 2016, as did Spirit Map self-assessment ratings since 2015 (the most recent congregational Spirit Map assessment). We do not, however, believe this reflects a poorer performance by the church because:
 - a. 2016 was an exceptional year for ends assessment in general—we have never seen scores that high on the ends. A comment from the 2016 survey summed up the general sense of well-being reflected in survey responses that year: "I know that checking as many boxes as I did "Strongly Agree" may not be so helpful as a more nuanced pattern of answers--yet that is how I feel. Unity Church is hitting on all cylinders these days, in my opinion."
 - b. 2016 was the only year in this iteration of the ends (2014-2017) in which we did not include the Spirit Map component before the ends assessment. Bringing it back could have dampened people's assessment of the ends.
 - c. We are mostly higher than or at parity with ends ratings in 2014, when we first started assessing this iteration of the ends.
 - d. All ends assessments continue to be in positive territory, where enough people strongly agree or agree the end is true to keep the average rating above "agree." In addition, there are no rating "extremes" (see page 24 about the response distribution).
 - e. We speculate that we're feeling more challenged by the world we live in now and that's largely responsible for the drop in our assessment of how well we're doing as individuals and at least some of that individual challenge transfers to evaluations of how we're doing as a church. An article in the February 17 *Time* magazine, "The Emotional Divide of Trump's Presidency" notes that "The unease haunts the crosstabs of public-opinion surveys: in an American Psychological Association (APA) poll released on Feb. 15, 6 in 10 Americans call the current political environment a source of "significant stress" for them. In the 2016 presidential campaign and its aftermath, the APA poll found the first statistically significant increase in stress levels since it started asking 10 years ago." We speculate this stress is influencing survey results, as revealed in the:

- i. Decline in people's assessment of their overall spiritual maturity (see page 19)
 - ii. Decline in self-assessment ratings overall (see page 20)
 - iii. Many survey comments referenced the current political climate and the various ways church helps people navigate those challenges.
- f. We also speculate, based on what people say in the comments, that people are "standing in the tragic gap" with more clarity about the needs of the world and their own responsibility for developing the spiritual resilience to meet those needs. See page 36 for the comments analysis.
- g. Finally, the fact that loyalty to the church has only increased over the years (see #3 below and page 28) also seems to say that even though people see the church and what we've been able to achieve more negatively than they did a year ago, they are even more loyal to what it's trying to create in the world.
- 3. Loyalty is at its highest level ever.**

2017 Average Ends Ratings



Notes:

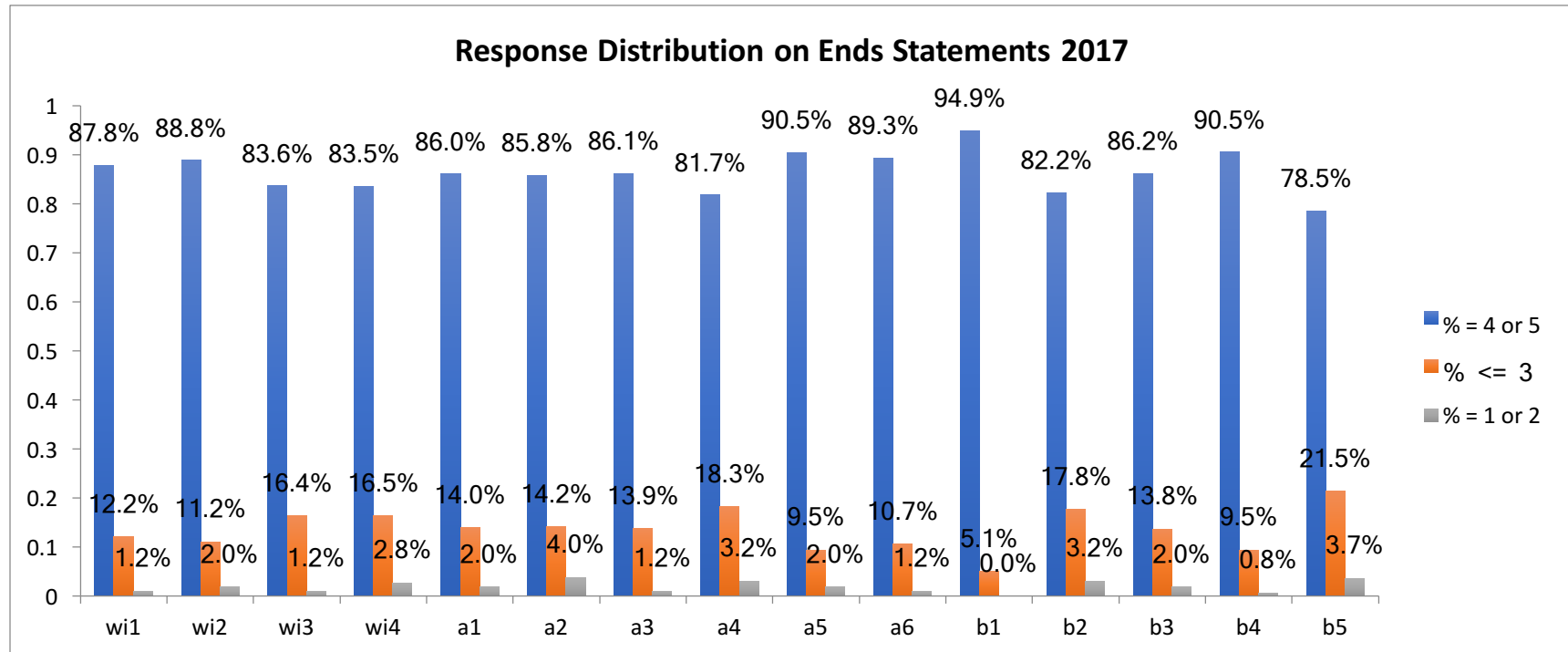
- See page 41 for a listing of all ends.
- The average for all ends is in positive – agree or strongly agree - territory (greater than 4.0).
- b4: highest rating. Serve as a trusted and visible leader, partner, and advocate for the creation of a just society and a sustainable environment
- b2: lowest rating. Build authentic relationships with people across differences in the spirit of humility and reverence
- differences ≥ 0.12 are statistically sig at the 95% level of confidence
- differences ≥ 0.08 are statistically sig at the 80% level of confidence

Response Distribution

Might it be the case that even though the averages are all ≥ 4.0 that there could be a situation where a significant number of people had negative evaluations?

For example it could be the case that 75% of respondents rate an End a 5 and 25% rate the End a 1. The average for this scenario would be 4.0, and we would probably be concerned that so many congregants provided such low scores.

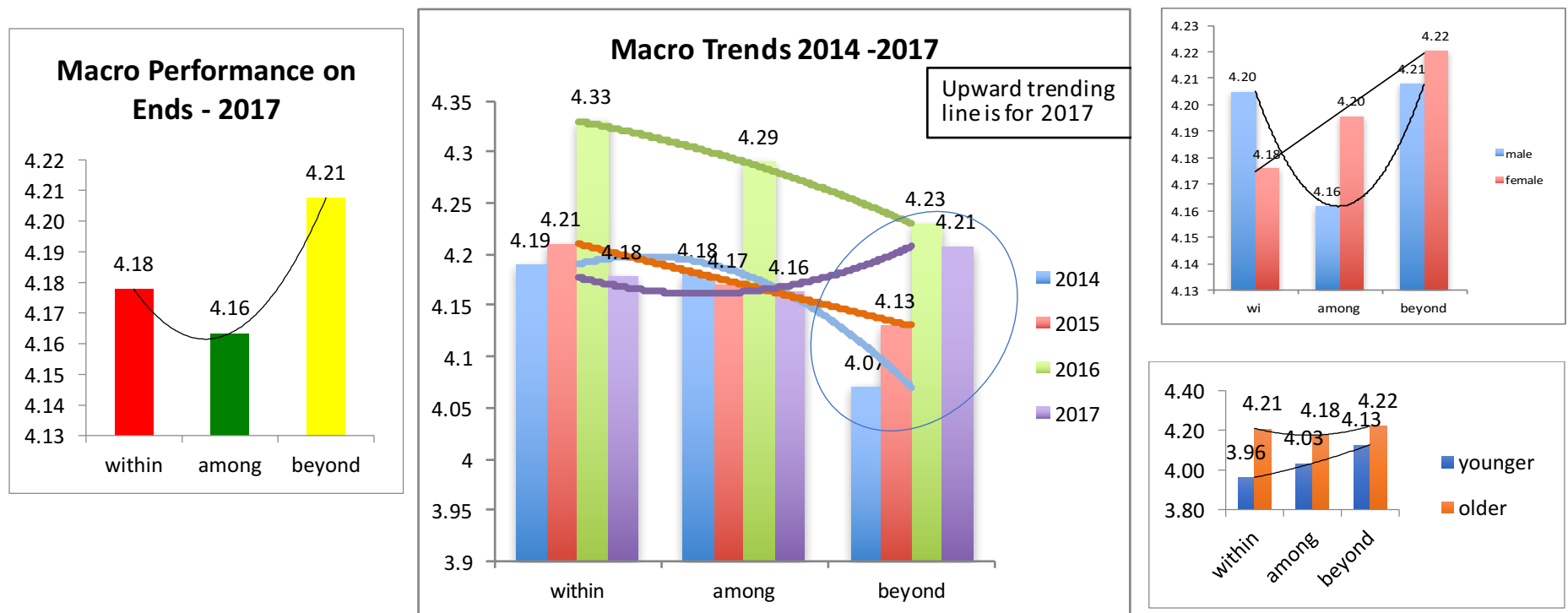
The evidence suggests that there are no “extreme” negative response distributions. The category (% = 1 or 2) has a maximum value of 4.0% for End a2 (Reach out to one another across differences and stand together in the face of injustice). The End b5 (Participate actively in the larger UU community) has the largest percent in the (% ≤ 3) category at 21.5%, the majority of those responses being “3”.



New Pattern for Within, Among and Beyond

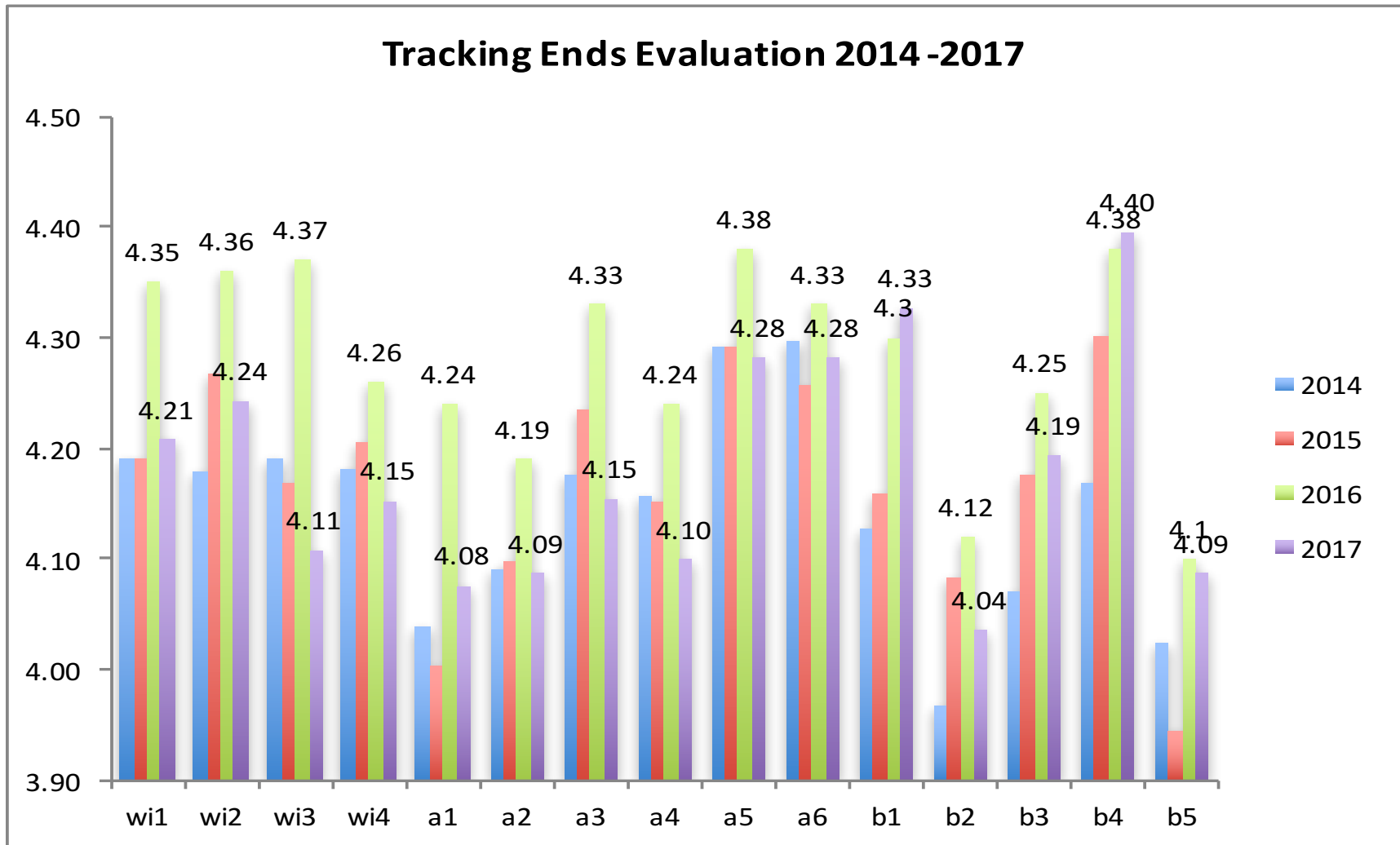
Note how the average rating of the beyond ends is higher than the average rating of the within ends which is higher than the average rating of the among ends (left chart). This is a significant change from previous years (middle chart). Notice how the middle chart also highlights the upward trend in the average rating of the set of beyond ends since 2014. It's also worth noting gender and age differences:

- Men rated the among ends lower than women did, while women rated the within ends lower than men did. They both had Beyond Ends rated at least as high or higher than the Within and Among Ends. (top left chart)
- Younger respondents had the reverse of the typical pattern: Beyond ends rated higher than Among ends, with Within ends rated lowest.



Tracking Ends Evaluation 2014-2017

Almost all ends ratings declined in 2017 from 2016 (see the table on the next page, but most ends ratings in 2017 are higher than or at parity with 2014 ratings (see the table on the next page).



Rank order of differences 2017-2014			Rank order of differences 2017-2016	
b4	0.23		b1	0.03
b1	0.20		b4	0.02
b3	0.12		b5	-0.01
b2	0.07		a6	-0.05
wi2	0.06		b3	-0.06
b5	0.06		b2	-0.08
a1	0.04		a5	-0.10
wi1	0.02		a2	-0.10
a2	0.00		wi4	-0.11
a5	-0.01		wi2	-0.12
a6	-0.01		a4	-0.14
a3	-0.02		wi1	-0.14
wi4	-0.03		a1	-0.16
a4	-0.06		a3	-0.18
wi3	-0.08		wi3	-0.26

Notes:

Positive number means 2017 average rating is higher than 2014/2016.

Negative number means 2017 average rating is lower than 2014/2016

'17-'14 differences ≥ 0.113 are significant at the 95% level of confidence (solid red line)

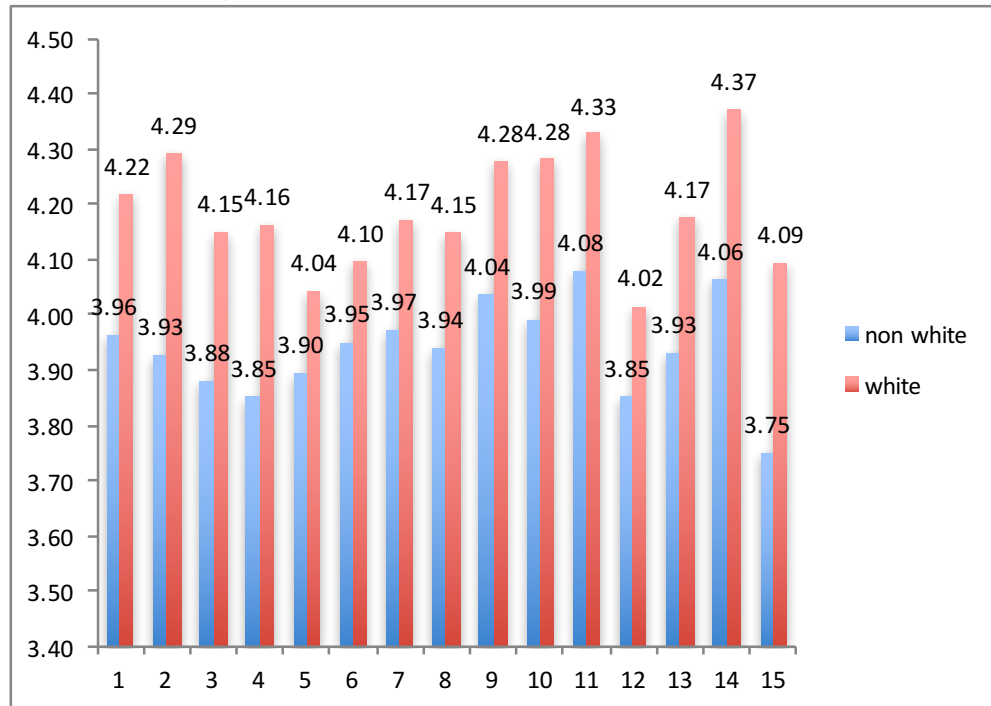
'17-'14 differences ≥ 0.074 are significant at the 80% level of confidence (dashed red line)

'17-'16 differences ≥ 0.109 are significant at the 95% level of confidence

'17-'16 differences ≥ 0.071 are significant at the 80% level of confidence

Comparing Ends Responses for Families of Color

One of the demographic questions on the survey asks, “Do you, or does anyone in your family, identify as a person of color?” We can compare ends ratings for people who answer yes to this question to the people who answer no. You can see in the chart and the tables below that non-white families rated every end, on average, lower than white families, and that the differences are larger in 2017 than they were in 2016. The increase in these differences might be accounted for by the way in which families of color experience a greater impact from the current political climate.



18% of respondents said yes, that they or someone in their family identifies as a person of color; 71% said no.

11% did not respond and are not included in this chart.

differences of 0.24 are significant at the 95% level of confidence (solid red line);

differences of 0.16 are significant at the 80% level of confidence (dotted red line)

Rank order differences
2017
non-white - white

wi2	-0.36
b5	-0.34
wi4	-0.31
b4	-0.31
a6	-0.29
wi3	-0.27
wi1	-0.25
b1	-0.25
a5	-0.24
b3	-0.24
a4	-0.21
a3	-0.2
b2	-0.16
a1	-0.15
a2	-0.15

Rank order differences
2016
white - non-white

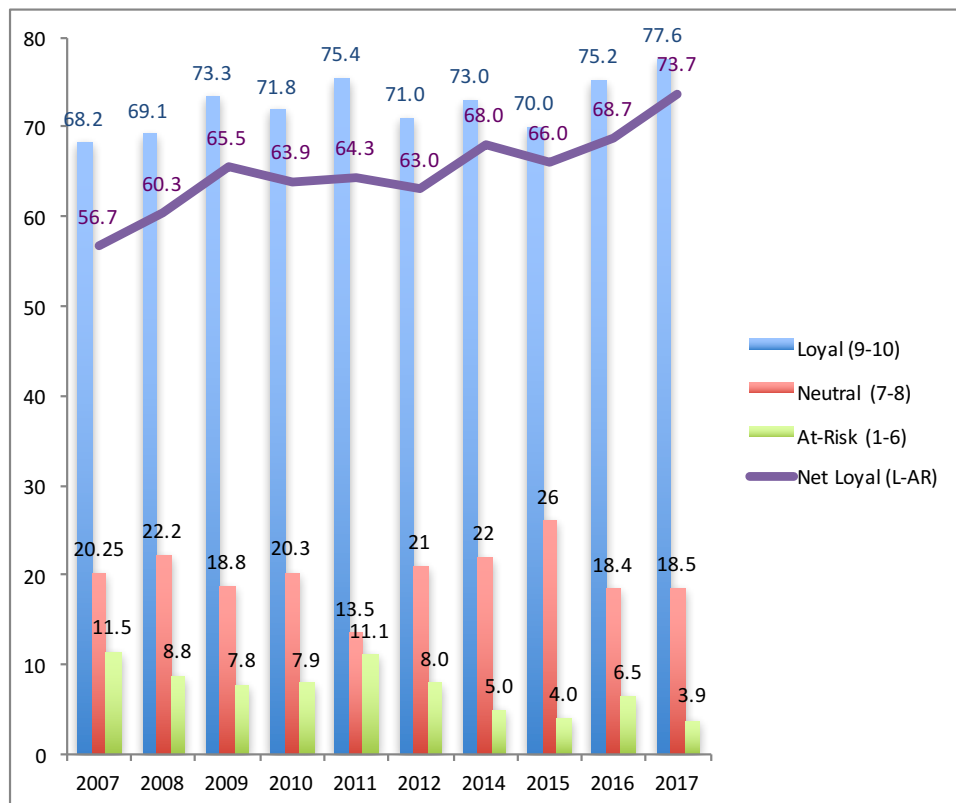
b3	0.29
b5	0.26
wi2	0.20
b4	0.18
b2	0.17
a5	0.15
a3	0.14
a1	0.13
wi1	0.13
b1	0.12
a4	0.08
a6	0.08
a2	0.05
wi4	0.02
wi3	0.00

Loyalty

We ask respondents whether, using a scale of 1-10, “Would you recommend UC to a friend or relative?” A person’s willingness to recommend is viewed in the business world as a key indicator of degree of loyalty to a brand or company. The graph below tracks how many people are:

- Loyal (responded with 9 or 10)
- Neutral (responded with 7 or 8)
- At Risk (responded with 1-6)

Net Loyalty, represented by the solid purple line in the chart below, equals the percentage of people who are loyal minus the percentage of people who are At Risk. We’ve tracked this key indicator for 10 years, and seen a steady increase. (More information on this Loyalty construct can be found in an article – “The One Number You Need to Grow” - published in the Harvard Business Review in Dec 2003)



Additional Ends Comparisons

The board asked for four additional analyses of the ends data, by:

- Number of years attending Unity Church
- Whether respondents had children at home under the age of 18
- Worship attendance in a typical month
- Pledging status

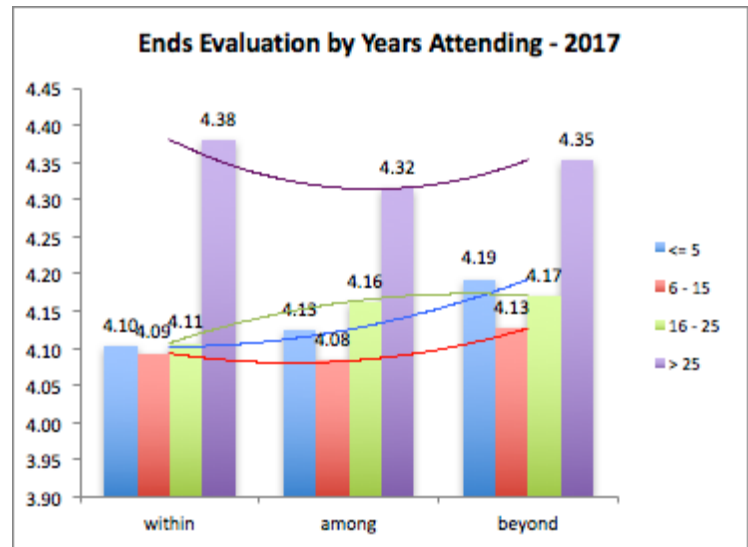
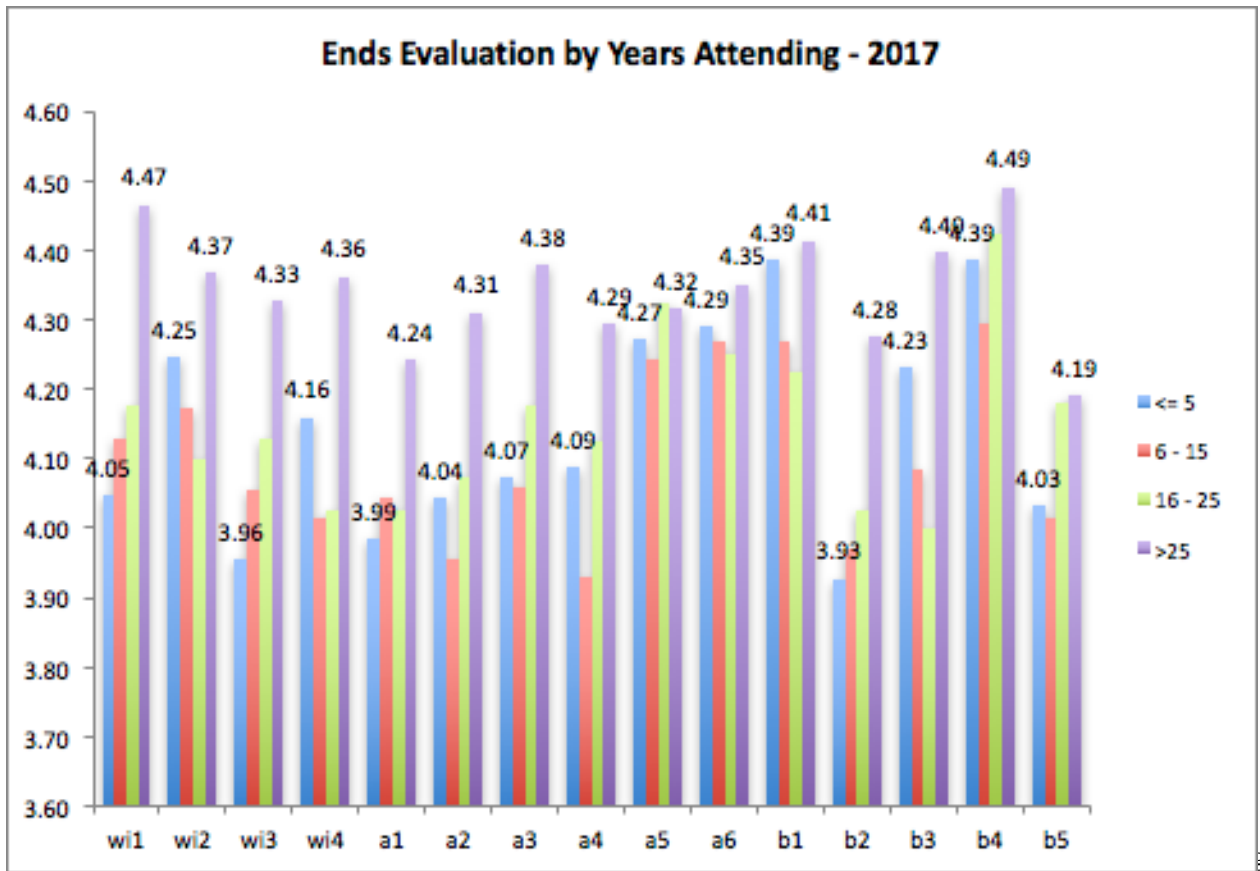
In summary:

- For all subgroups, the macro Beyond Evaluation is as high or higher than the Among or Within Evaluation with the exception of the subgroup representing those attending for more than 25 years (W = 4.38, A = 4.32, B = 4.35). This reverses the previously observed pattern where the Beyond Evaluation is the lowest.
- The macro Beyond Evaluations show the most agreement (least variation) among any given set of subgroups; Within shows the least agreement (most variation) except for worship attendance where Among has slightly more variation than Within.
- All macro evaluations for all subgroups are positive (≥ 4.0) with the exception of the Within evaluation for the “No Pledge” subgroup (= 3.90) (this subgroup is a very small sample size).

Ends Evaluation by Number of Years Attending

The table shows what percentage of respondents fell into each of the “years attending” categories. The charts below show how each age category responded to the ends individually and on a macro within, among, and beyond level. Note how the pattern of response for people attending longer than 25 years is different than all other subgroups, with both higher ratings overall and highest ratings for Within.

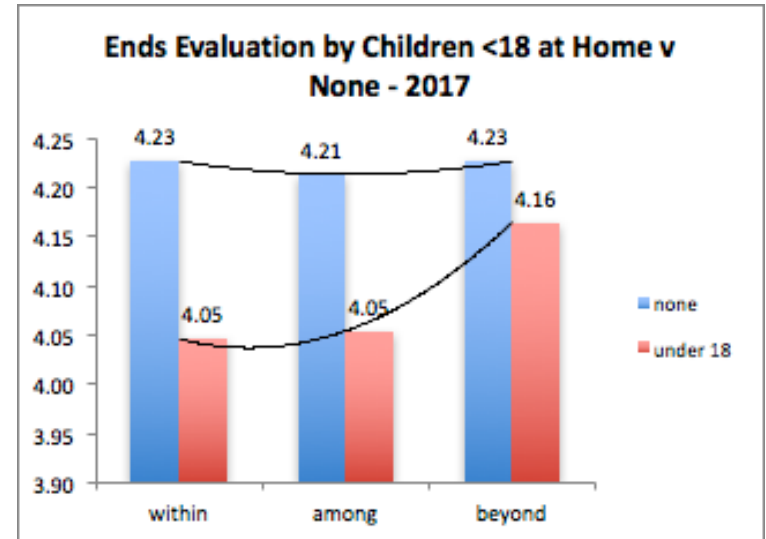
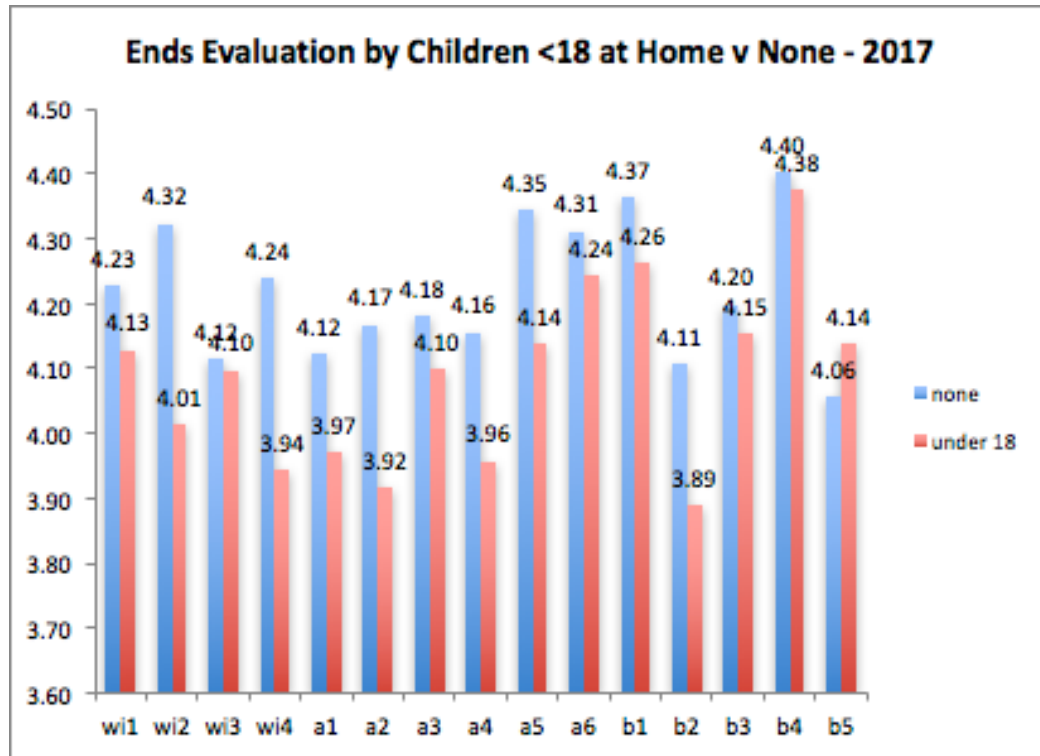
Category	Percent
<=5	25.7%
6 - 15	26.1%
16 - 25	15.1%
> 25	21.3%
na	11.8%



Ends Evaluation by Children Under 18 at Home or No

The table shows what percentage of respondents had children under the age of 18 at home. The charts below show how the responses for people with children under 18 at home compared to those who don't, for the ends individually and on a macro within, among, and beyond level.

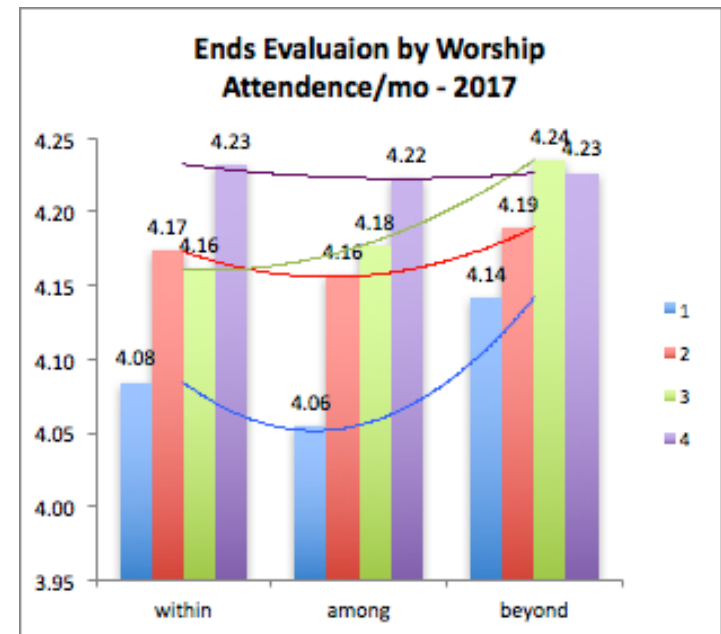
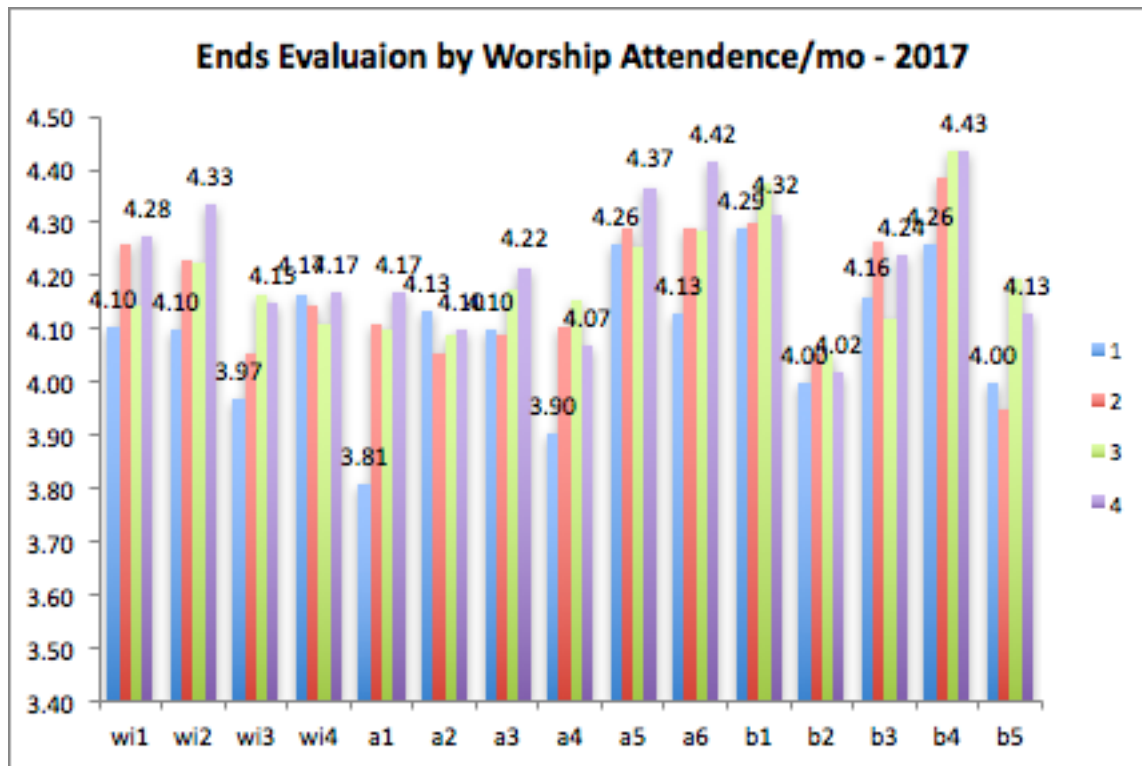
Category	Percent
none	63%
kids under 18	26%
na	11%



Ends Evaluation by Worship Attendance

The table shows what percentage of respondents attend worship one, two, three or four times a week. The charts below show how the responses compared for each category, for the ends individually and on a macro within, among, and beyond level.

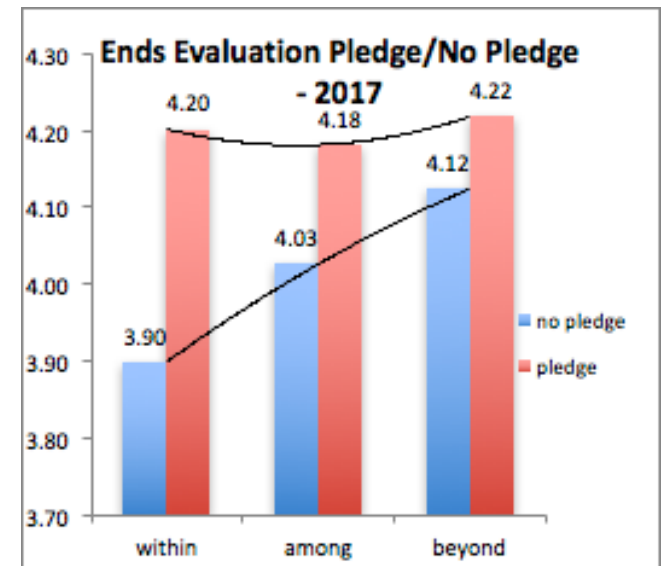
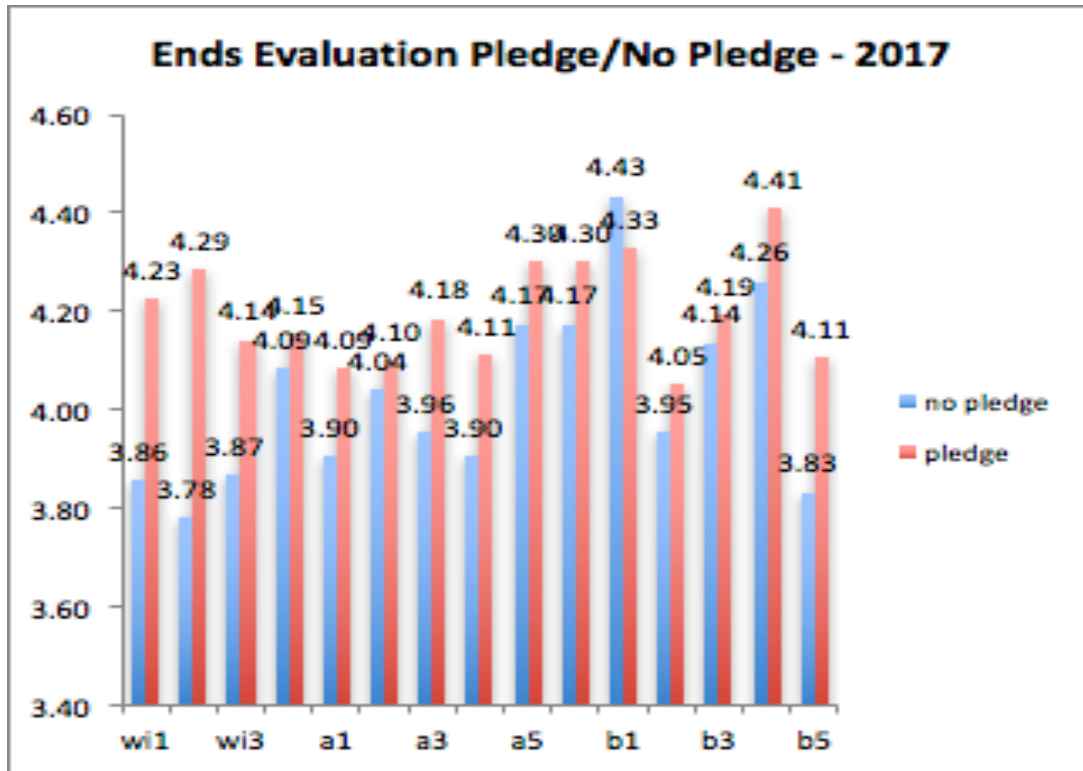
Category	Percent
1	12%
2	21%
3	33%
4	22%
na	11%



Ends Evaluation by Pledging Status

The table shows what percentage of respondents pledge. The charts below show how the responses compared for each category, for the ends individually and on a macro within, among, and beyond level. Note the different response pattern at the macro level.

Category	Percent
Pledge	79%
No pledge	8.8%
na	12.1%



Program/Activity Evaluation

We ask people to indicate, on a scale of 1-5, the degree to which a particular set of church programs has had an impact on their spiritual growth and maturity. Sunday worship, music, and pilgrimage top the list:

Program/Activity Area	% of respondents participating	Impact on Spiritual Maturity
Attending Sunday Worship	89%	4.36
Pilgrimage	11%	4.29
Music	27%	4.22
Children's Religious Education	28%	3.83
Pastoral Care	19%	3.75
Other Worship and Meditation Programs	48%	3.64
Adult Religious Education	58%	3.62
Administrative Ministry	26%	3.58
Community Outreach	42%	3.56
Fellowship	25%	3.40
Reading and Writing	37%	3.40
Food Ministry	21%	3.36

It's worth considering how to increase the impact for programs that many people participate in, and where the impact ratings are not as high:

- Community Outreach
- Adult Religious Education
- Other Worship and Meditation Programs (includes activities such as Black Friday service, Christmas Pageant, Sangha Zen, Solstice service, Welcome Teams, Worship Associates)

Comments Analysis

Note: This comment analysis is an edited form of the analysis received by the board and the Executive Team, in order to avoid publishing specific comments.

Three key themes emerging from the comments:

1. **Yearning for Connection Across Difference.**

People are experiencing a certain anguish of separation from others and a yearning to be connected, particularly across racial and class lines. A few of these comments focus on the view that the liberal values of the church provoke separation from people. And one comment from a different perspective asked for no more preaching about listening to people who voted for Trump, saying they have experienced hate from them in deeply damaging and personal ways. But most of the comments about separation from others showed a longing for connection across difference that people do not yet see as real. There's also interest in those comments in changing how we do church and in changing ourselves to be able to connect across difference.

2. **Personal Responsibility for a Deeper Connection to Church**

The comments this year about personal connection to Unity focus more than in previous years on how people have found their place in the church community, have found a spiritual home here. There are still comments about the challenges of finding one's way into a large church but they are fewer and focus less on what the church should do as an institution for me and more on what we as a community should do together to be welcoming. People seem more willing to play an active role in shaping their connection and to make sure others are connected too. This is apparent partly in the way people comment about their participation in the church and its programs. There's a recognition that they have a responsibility to make room in their lives for church, that they do indeed "value a deeply meaningful, transforming liberal religious experience" because they make space for it—or recognize they need to make more.

3. **Church Programs Contribute to Spiritual Growth**

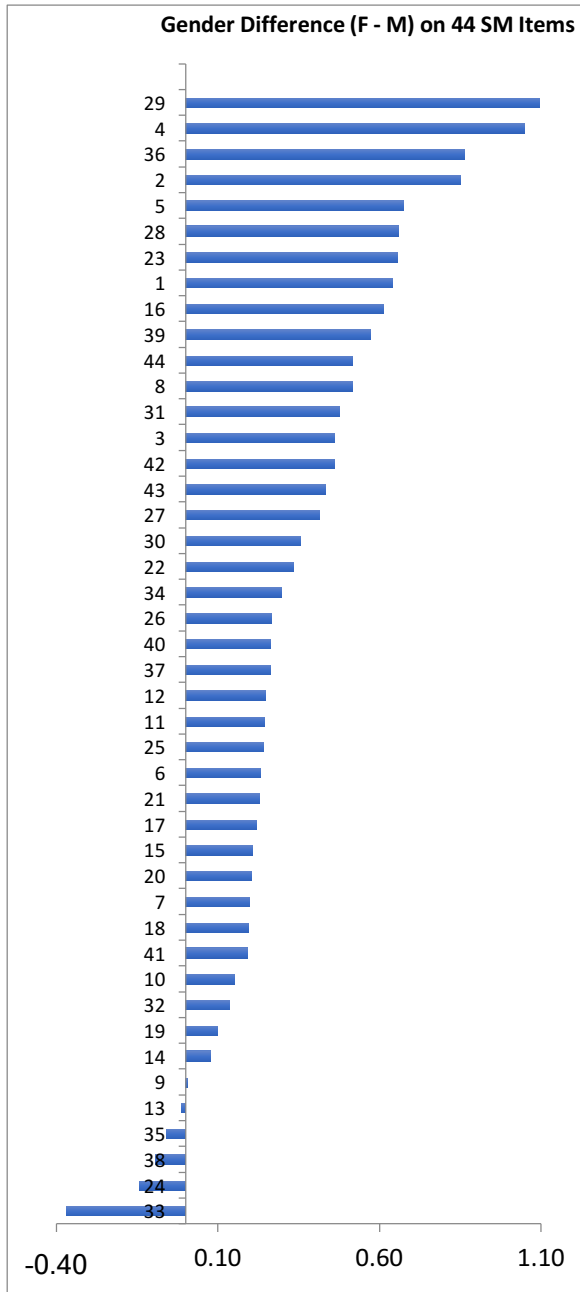
People deeply value church programs and can enthusiastically endorse many that contributed to their spiritual growth. Just a sampling of some of the comments (note: all comments below used with permission since they are being published):

- Being a worship associate has been one of the most powerful spiritual growth experiences of my adult life. The seasonal meetings and conversations are some of the richest and most thoughtful I've ever been privileged to participate in, and the process of thinking through shaping the services and reflecting on the monthly themes is such a gift. I'm so honored to be part of this experience.

- I have spent at least 45 Christmas Eves attending, participating in, volunteering with the Pageant. It is one of the most important spiritual practices for me each year. To see the families who are returning and those who are new embrace the mystery that is our faith is powerful.
- Writing as a spiritual practice has sharpened my vision and deepened my trust in life's abundance.

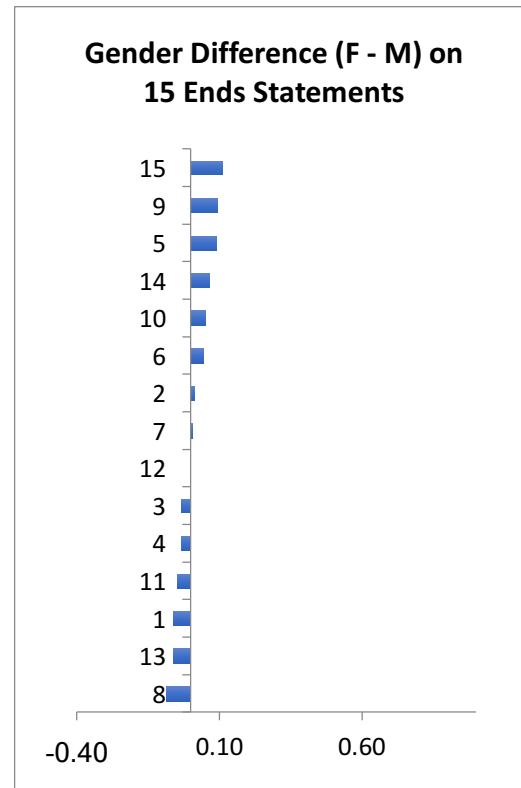
Additional Ends and Spirit Map Results by Gender and Age

Gender

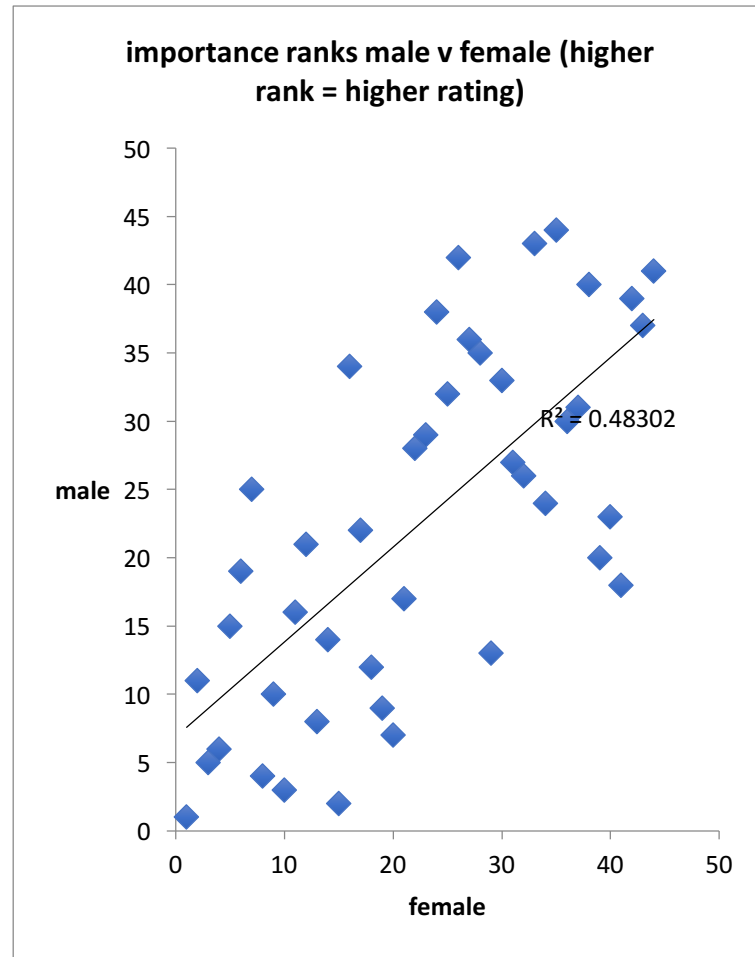
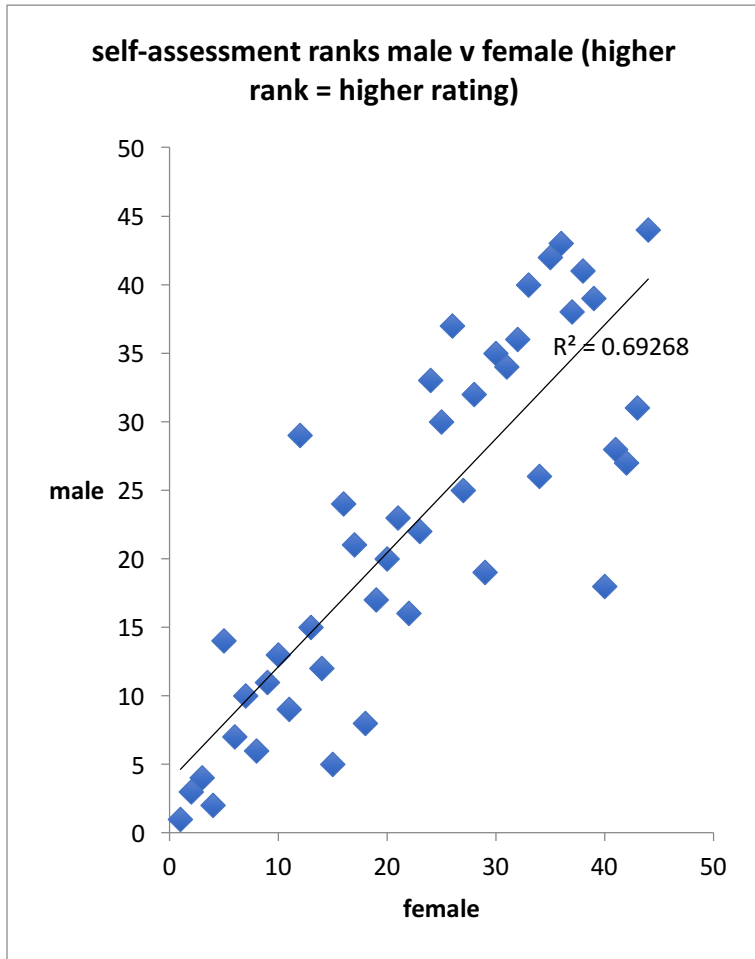


Females tend to provide higher self-assessment ratings on Spirit Map items. See the chart to the left. Bars to the right show where females rated the item higher, bars to the left are for items where males have a higher self-assessment rating. Bars are scaled to show the actual differences.

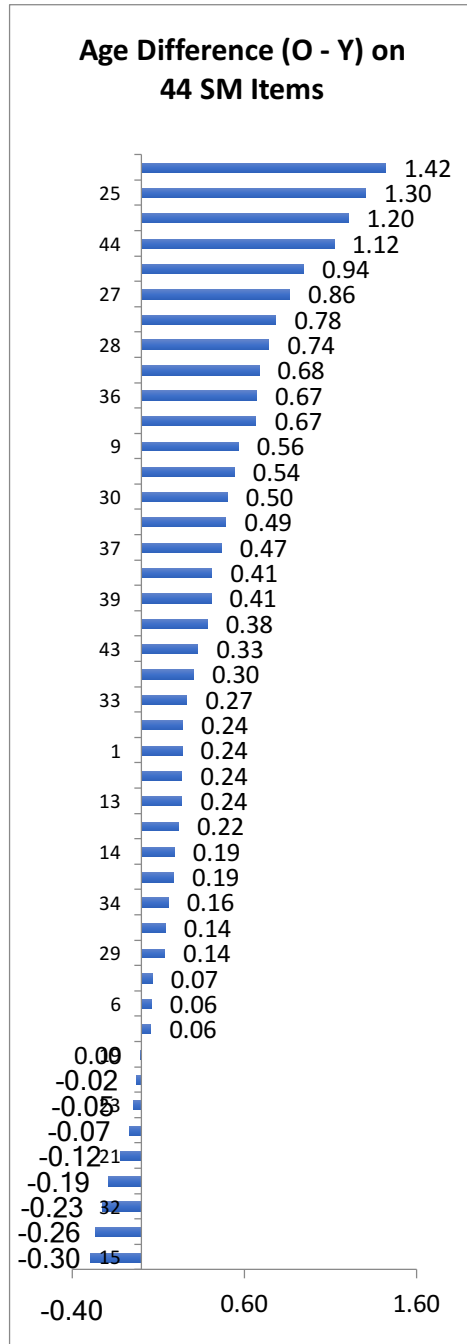
Females and males are about evenly split on who rates ends statements higher (see the chart below). In addition, the differences on the ends are much smaller than the differences on the Spirit Map items.



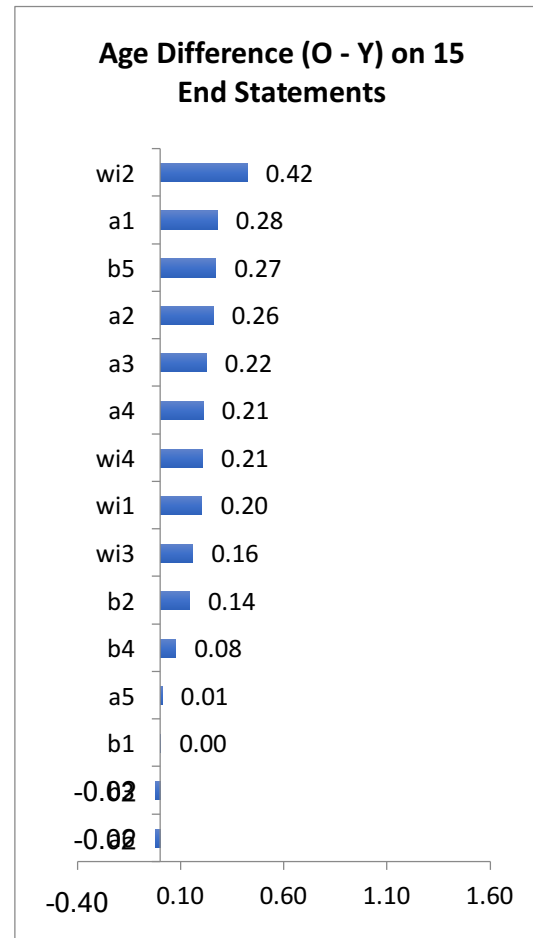
Despite the fact that females tend to give Spirit Map items higher self-assessment ratings, the rank order of the Spirit Map items according to self-assessment is pretty much the same for males and females. The same is true of the importance ratings, although not quite as much as for the self-assessment ratings. The graphs below plot each Spirit Map item according to the rank order given that item by males and by females. Higher rank order number equals higher self-assessment or importance ratings. If the rank order of the items was the same for males and females, you'd see a straight line on the graphs below. It comes pretty close.



Age



We also compared Spirit Map self-assessments and Ends assessments by age. In order to get enough people in the sample, we divided the respondents into two categories: those younger than 45 and those 45 and older. Those 45 and older tend to provide higher evaluations on Spirit Map items. See the chart to the left. Bars to the right in the graph below show where those 45 and older rated the item higher, and show the differences. Those 45 and older also tend to rate the ends statements higher (see the chart below), but the differences on the ends are much smaller than the differences on the Spirit Map items.



Additional Results Available

We have also calculated Signature Strengths, Key Opportunities, Quadrant Maps and Drivers of Spiritual Maturity by gender, and drivers of Spiritual Maturity by age. We would be happy to provide these charts if you're interested in them.

Unity Church Unitarian Ends Statements

Within

1. **The people of Unity Church-Unitarian value a deeply meaningful, transforming liberal religious experience. As individuals, we**
 - a. Open ourselves to compassionate pastoral care in times of joy, sorrow, and transition
 - b. Develop spiritual practices that nurture reverence and encourage diverse worship services rich in beauty, serenity, community and joy
 - c. Embrace our identity as Unitarian-Universalists and live out the principles of our shared faith in our daily lives
 - d. Cultivate a spirit of curiosity and welcome, growing from a desire for authentic relationship.

Among

2. **Unity Church-Unitarian is a community of welcome, reverence, and deep connection. As a community, we**
 - a. Sustain and encourage one another in love
 - b. Value our shared ministry and practice it with integrity
 - c. Reach out to one another across differences and stand together in the face of injustice
 - d. Foster a culture of open, inclusive leadership and meaningful engagement
 - e. Are generous with our time, talents, resources and creativity
 - f. Are careful stewards of our resources and facilities.

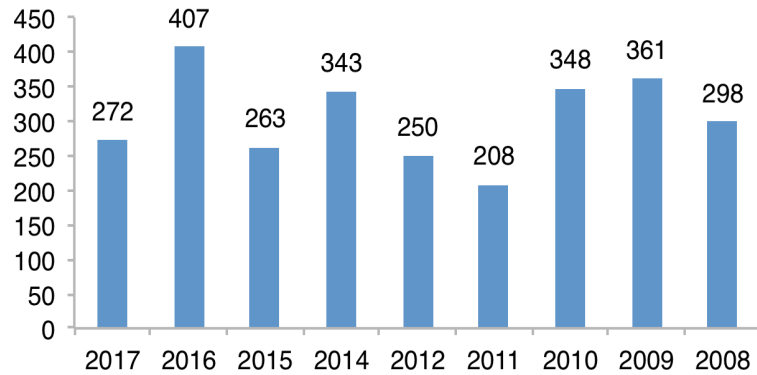
Beyond

3. **Unity Church-Unitarian carries out the work of love in community, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in our world. Grounded in the transforming power of our faith, we**
 - a. Open our doors and our hearts to those who seek comfort, courage, and meaning
 - b. Build authentic relationships with people across differences, in the spirit of humility and reverence
 - c. Live out our commitment to racial reconciliation and to dismantling racism
 - d. Serve as a trusted and visible leader, partner, and advocate for the creation of a just society and a sustainable environment
 - e. Participate actively in the larger Unitarian-Universalist community.

Survey Demographics

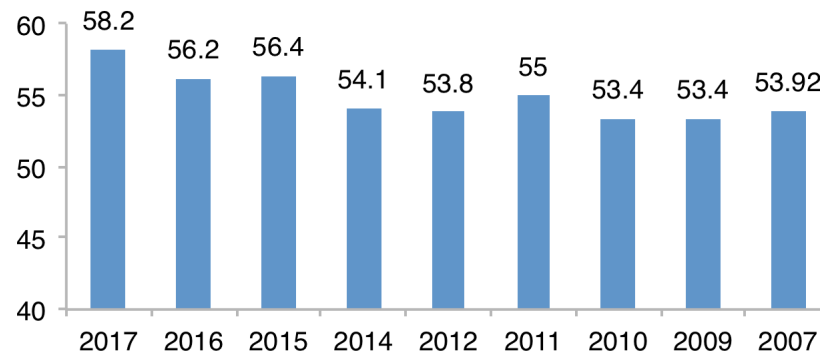
272 people provided survey information. This is in line with previous years in which Spirit Map was part of the survey:

responses

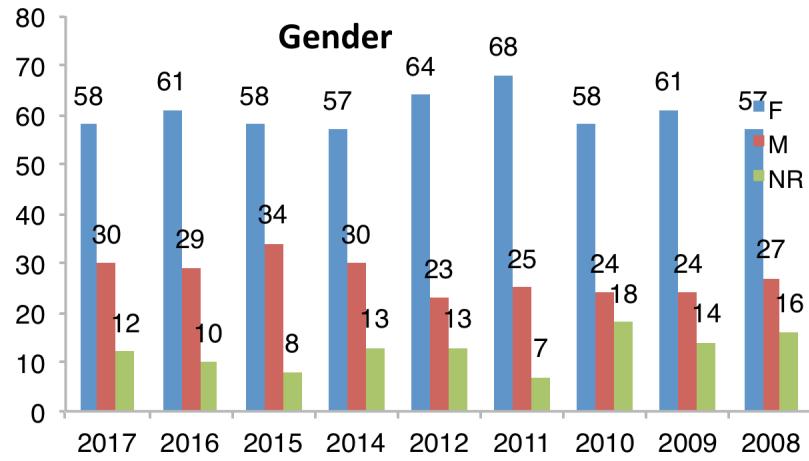


Survey respondents' average age increased slightly over last year, although when we weight the average ends ratings according to number of surveys received in each age group, the scores on the ends don't change much.

age



Survey gender distribution is in line with the past three years:



Spirit Map Survey Structure

The Spirit Map portion of the survey asked congregants to respond to 44 items two ways:

- The degree to which the items are true for them at this time (on a scale of 1-10)
- The degree to which the items are important to them (on a scale of 1-10)

It also asked congregants to assess their subjective sense of their:

- Current level of overall spiritual maturity (on a scale of 1-10)
- Overall level of spiritual maturity five years from now (on a scale of 1-10)

We aggregate and analyze our congregants' responses to present our congregation's Signature Strengths, Key Opportunities, Quadrant Map, and Drivers of Spiritual Maturity.

How We Determine Signature Strengths and Key Opportunities

To determine Signature Strength and Key Opportunity items, first we find the average self-assessment rating for each item. We'll call that the congregation self-assessment rating for each item. We also find the average importance rating for each item. We'll call that the congregation importance rating for each item.

To determine our congregation's Signature Strengths we focus on the Spirit Map items with congregation self-assessment ratings greater than the average congregation self-assessment rating. In other words, we focus on the items which the congregation finds, on average, relatively more true of it. For these items, we multiply an item's congregation self-assessment rating by its corresponding congregation importance rating to determine a prioritizing metric for each item and then rank order the prioritizing metrics. The top five Spirit Map items (and ties, if any) in this ranking are our congregation's Signature Strengths. *Thus, Spirit Map items that are both important to our congregants and where congregants are already doing relatively well will have the best chance of being Signature Strengths.*

To determine our Key Opportunities, we focus on the Spirit Map items with congregation self-assessment ratings below the average congregation self-assessment rating. For each of these items we determine its "opportunity gap": the difference

between the maximum self-assessment rating possible (10) and the current congregation self-assessment rating. This opportunity gap is the maximum self-assessment gain possible for that item. We multiply the opportunity gap by the congregation importance rating for that item to determine its prioritizing metric. We rank order the prioritizing metrics and the top five Spirit Map items in this ranking (and ties, if any) are our congregation's Key Opportunities. *Thus, Spirit Map items that are both important to our congregants and where congregants are currently doing relatively poorly will have the best chance of being Key Opportunities.*

Spirit Map Items with Our Congregation's Self-Assessment and Importance Rank

We assign each item a rank order number from 1-44 according to its average self-assessment and average importance scores. 44 is the highest average score; 1 is the lowest.

Number	Self-Assessment Rank 1-44	Importance Rank 1-44	Item
1	21	35	I see beauty all around me.
2	14	10	I think about my place in the universe.
3	24	33	I delight in experiences both great and small
4	28	34	I feel part of something larger than myself.
5	37	40	I seek opportunities to learn and grow.
6	40	25	Leading a moral life makes me happy.
7	2	12	I have a clear purpose to my life and am able to articulate that purpose to both myself and others.
8	4	8	I actively practice my spiritual or religious faith.
9	25	30	I seek harmony with others.
10	7	28	I give to others fully and generously.
11	3	5	I act in a spiritual manner.
12	31	32	I am reflective.
13	29	43	I am respectful of the feelings, actions, and opinions of others.
14	35	42	I take responsibility for the consequences of my actions, even those that are unintended.

15	26	37	I act in an authentic manner.
16	43	41	I care deeply about the welfare of others.
17	44	39	I believe it matters what I do.
18	30	31	I act with the interests of others in mind.
19	41	44	I act with integrity.
20	33	27	I am self-aware.
21	16	23	I freely and intentionally give my time and energy to others.
22	22	17	I am mindful of my emotions.
23	38	19	I see something universal in all human struggle.
24	42	20	I accept ambiguity as inherent in life.
25	15	7	Awareness of my mortality informs how I live my life.
26	10	6	Having good boundaries allows me to act with intention.
27	18	9	Even though I cannot know exactly what will happen, the promises I make give shape to my future and meaning to my life.
28	6	4	I perceive and respond to truth that is expressed in myth or poetry.
29	11	2	I appreciate the beauty and power of religious symbols and rituals other than my own.
30	20	3	I am aware of some of the limitations or paradoxes of my own preferred religious vocabulary.
31	13	15	I act with awareness of my place in the interconnected web of existence.
32	39	26	I am curious to learn more about how the world around me works.
33	19	16	I can tell the difference between what I am responsible for, and what I do not control.
34	5	18	I make good decisions about when to act.
35	17	36	I'm able to adapt when things do not turn out the way I want.
36	23	21	My spiritual growth is important to me.
37	8	13	I have the ability to repent, forgive myself, and change.
38	9	14	I can ask for and accept forgiveness.
39	34	29	I experience awe.

40	32	22	I am able to exercise power without corruption.
41	36	11	I can give loyalty to another's leadership without losing my integrity.
42	1	1	I act in a religious manner.
43	27	38	I believe my life has meaning and purpose.
44	12	24	I can be in the presence of my own or another's pain without needing to flee or fix it.