

Ministerial Search Survey Report

Oct. 15, 2023

Ministerial Search

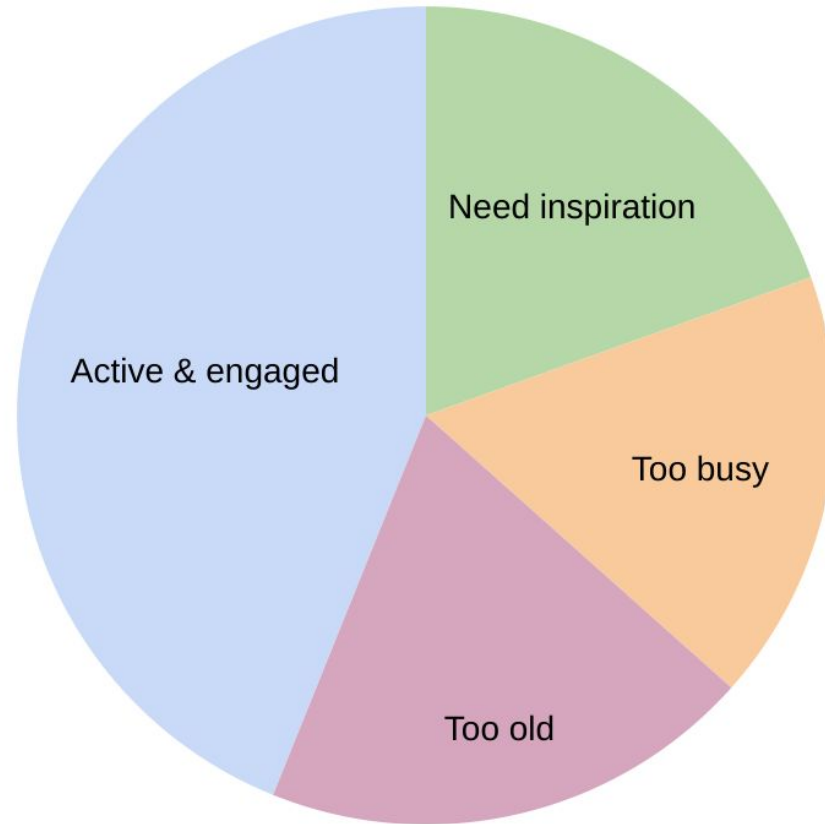
We are told that the better a congregation describes itself to prospects, the more likely a compatible match could result.

Survey Report

This report is not a statistically sound description
of Halifax Unitarians.

It is a summary of the information provided
by 42 respondents.

Respondents' Roles in Congregation



Today's Question

Is this Survey Report a fair representation
of the Halifax Unitarians congregation in 2023?

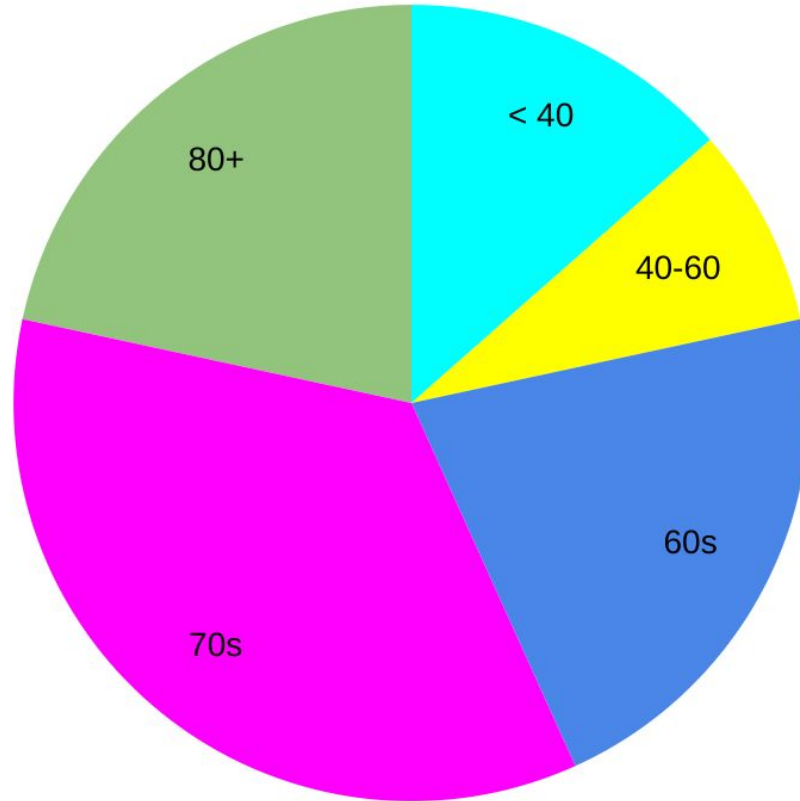
We are predominately white, highly-educated,
retired, heterosexual, cis women.

With a smattering of many
other personal identities.

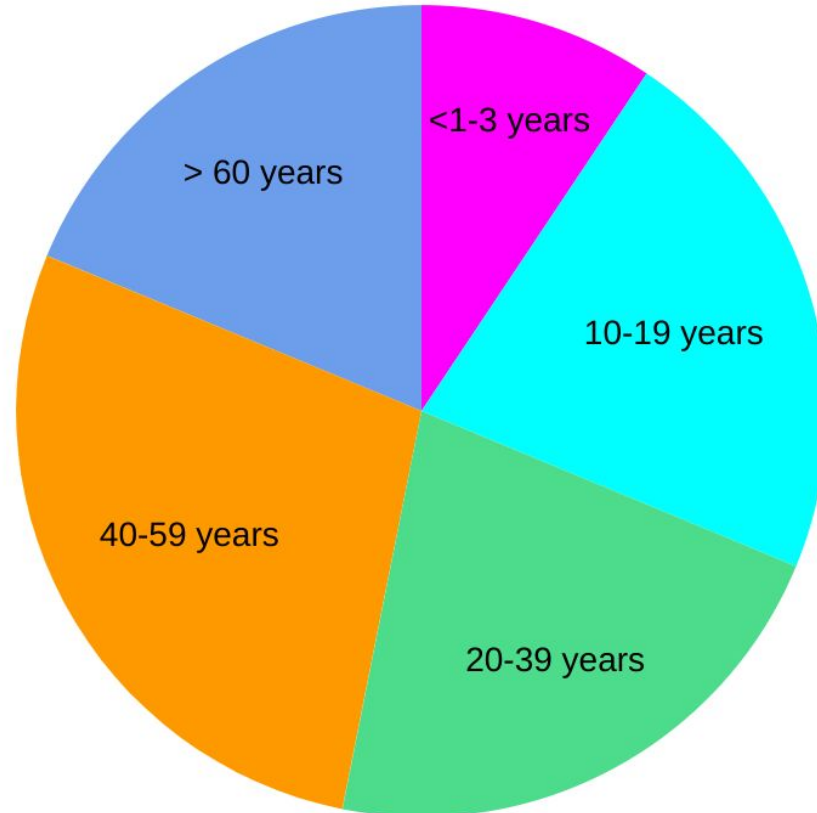
And a significant number of employed adults
and university students.

But few children under 18.

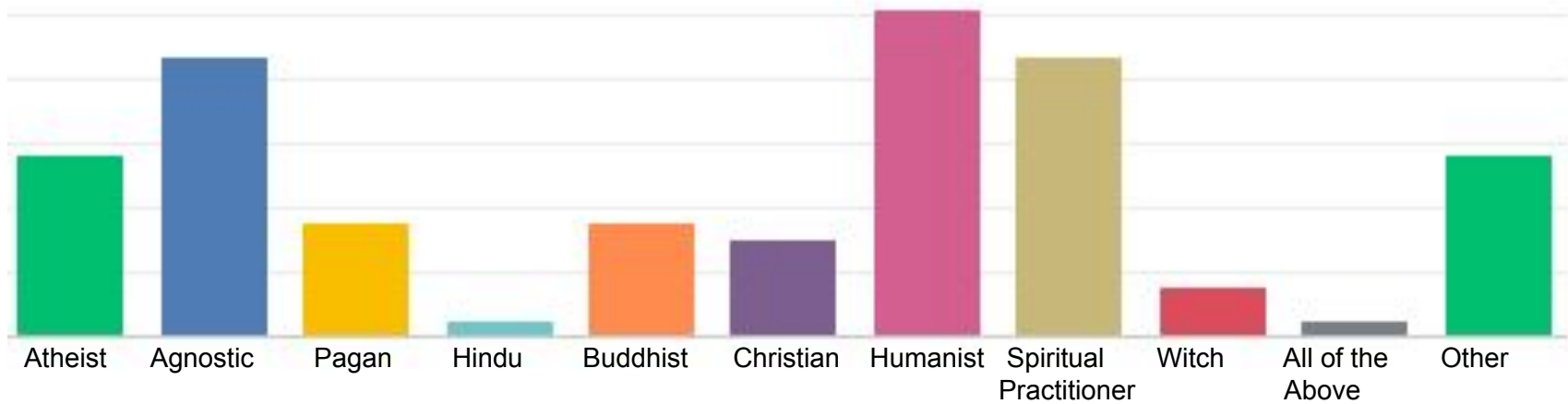
Halifax Unitarians Age Ranges



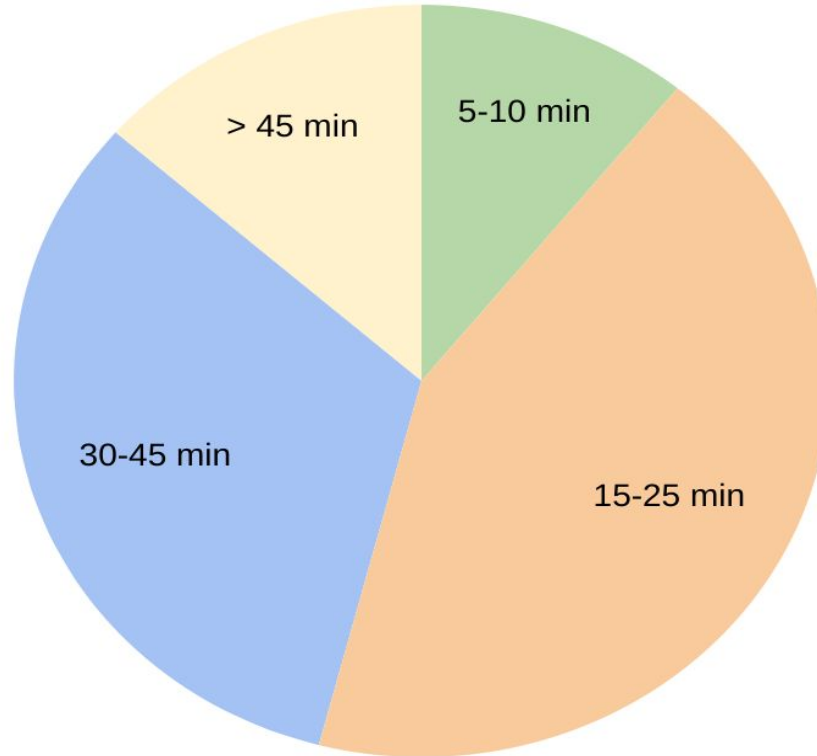
How Long We've Been UUs



How We Perceive Ourselves



Travel Time to 5500 Inglis



What Makes Us Proud

inclusivity

welcoming

Halifax Unitarians

refugee program

new and different music

coffeehouse

choir

Saturday brunch

longevity

social justice

friendly

unpretentious

class diversity

freedom of thought

no dogma

reasoned decisions

acceptance of diversity

good place to make friends

climate change fight

free-thinking

sense of humour

lightheartedness

short services

LGBTQ2S+ accepting

Caring Committee

RE for children

social events

open exploration

anti-racism

reconciliation work

supporting each other

autonomous authority

spiritual freedom

dare to be different

questioning people

history with social causes

support of aging members

liberal thinking

8 CUC principles

homey-feeling building

grounds and location

theological openness

sustainability

willingness to be brave

long-lasting friendships

Top 4 Areas Where We Must Do Better

1. Outreach, especially to recruit families with young children
2. Be more welcoming and educated about all who enter our doors to increase and retain members and friends
3. Expand the number of active participants OR limit what we undertake
4. Care for one another with compassion and understand that we are doing our best

Plus calls for more social events, better communication, uplifting services and music, and engagement of Zoom audience

Congregational Response

Our 3 Most Important Ministerial Roles



Offer challenging & inspirational services

Spiritual yet informative while challenging the congregation

Not afraid to speak of other religions

Well-prepared and written, no winging it

Connected to nature, marking the seasons, bring us outdoors, connected to the elements

Knowledge component to deepen my perspective

Well developed and challenging sermons

Music. Singing. Very short sermons. Break-out groups

Incorporate the natural world and social issues in their services. And music!!

Moments of meditation/mindfulness within the service

Thoughtful services that reflect a spiritual vision and how to live that spirituality

Motivating showing how change can be good

Thought-provoking themes, including youth appropriate messages

Engaging in the never-ending search for truth

Exchange with members in response to the main presentation

Interesting, challenging to a degree, varied - not predictable

Dislike breaking into small groups for discussions as part of a service

Not the same old, same old every week

Start and end on time

Actively care about welfare of all members

Relate on topics of aging and spirituality

Being inspiring, not patronizing

Secure within themselves

Don't let their own vision get in the way of what the congregation is saying to them

Gets to know and care for the individual members of the congregation

Fosters a true spirit of community

I like humility in a leader

Friendly, thoughtful, caring, competent, knowledgeable

Has a good sense of humour, loves music

Able to work with multiplicity and be flexible about meeting people in different ways

Brave, curious, compassionate, and collaborative

Supports our shared ministry vision

Shows up to events outside Sunday Service

A minister who loves being a minister and it shows

Is accessible and articulate, though not verbose

Fully participates in Fellowship activities

Raise Unitarian profile in Halifax

The long-term viability of Halifax UUs as a liberal religious institution and a voice for the key social issues of our times.

Increasing our membership; actively seeking new more diverse, younger members - before we all die off.

Put UUCH on the map for more involvement with other churches.

Form alliances with other like-minded communities in an effort to make HRM a better place for ALL its residents.

Outreach to city's academic communities.

The social media presence could be increased.

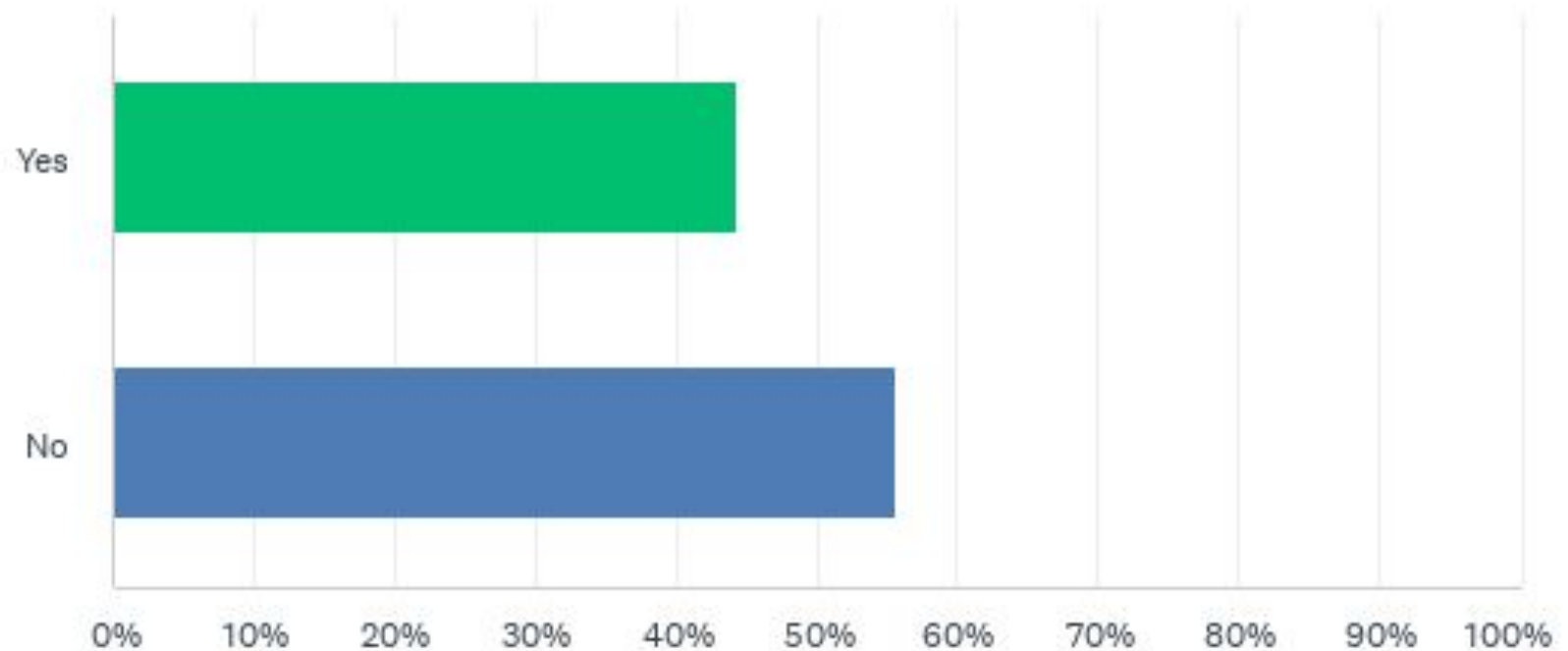
Spreading the UU message to the larger community through activism, action, presence, joy, etc.

Breadth of Diversity We Welcome

We welcome racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual orientation,
disability, health and sex diversity.

The Bottom Line

Would you increase your pledge to hire a minister?



Congregational Response

Areas for Further Study

Answers to *Why do you come to Sunday Services?* and *If you haven't been attending since Covid, can you tell us what has impacted your decision?* yielded a rich variety of responses that cannot be easily summarized. They are instructive and should be studied by the Board, Worship Committee, Membership, and the Congregation. They are quoted on the following slides for your consideration.

6. Why Do You Come to Sunday Services?

I come for spiritual fulfillment, a reset (body, mind, soul) for the rest of the week, the music, and to interact with our community and friends.

To see the faces of my friends.

For the spiritual inspiration and warmth and encouragement of community.

I want to be inspired.

For spiritual fulfillment, inspiration, and reflection. To be in community with folks of similar values.

For inspiration, for thought-provocation, for music, for comradeship, for serving the community...

I enjoy the sense of community social interaction, the stimulation of ideas, the music, meeting people with whom I can comfortably discuss serious topics.

Continued: 6. Why Do You Come to Sunday Services?

I enjoy the people. I hope to find the services interesting. I often need to connect with people about committee things, which I enjoy.

To hear something thought provoking and discuss it with other members of the congregation as well as the music.

For community. To be reminded of my spirituality. To be among people who see that I'm doing that and allow me to do it (and may even be engaged in the same pursuit).

To listen to good talk. Silence.

Haven't been lately. Usually to learn something new, hear music, and socialization.

To experience fellowship, worship and music first hand.

To meet politically and spiritually like-minded people, social time, to develop a community, seeking belonging, to have new ideas introduced and a space to talk about them without pressure to integrate them into my life.

Continued: 6. Why Do You Come to Sunday Services?

I care for the people there and usually get a message of importance from the speaker.

It is the missing spiritual dimension in today's modern world.

Enjoy the fellowship, the music, the presentations, the social activities, trips to the city, and more.

Inspiration, emotional comfort/ encouragement, meet friends and talk about life.

It is a place where I feel safe to be myself and to be comforted and supported by those around me. It is the main sense of community I get. It's very accessible for someone with a busy schedule. I love hearing everyone else's experiences and and thought provoking conversations.

1, To hear new ideas and viewpoints. 2. To communicate with friends.

The sense of community and identity I feel with like-minded people. It's my anchor. Even when a service or sermon is only so-so, it's important to me to be in the interesting, loving company of my UU friends.

Continued: 6. Why Do You Come to Sunday Services?

Long time and committed Unitarian.

To be with like-minded people in an ongoing community. To be involved and inspired in a spiritual adventure.

To connect with others, to connect with myself, have some time to reflect and get inspired, to help formulate my beliefs and have a place/space to engage in spiritual practices that have meaning to me, to help inform my parenting/personal way of being.

For renewal.

It's the core activity from which all other community-building emerges.

Genuinely enjoy all aspects of service: the music, the people, post service gathering. Could use more of "Singing the Journey" supplement & more sacred space without interruptions.

To be part of a community with its 7 principles.

Continued: 6. Why Do You Come to Sunday Services?

Shared ideology. Inclusiveness. Uplifting, empowering, insightful, inspirational sermons. Quiet time/space for contemplation/meditation. Positive interactions with people. Children's program.

Via Zoom. This is a special part of my week when I can connect with the community and reflect on the uniqueness of these times.

It fulfills a spiritual need.

I rarely attend but I have a strong allegiance to the community.

When I am able to go to church, it helps to feel a sense of comfort, spiritual and emotional uplift and broadening by participating in a church service.

To see my people. This is my only social group.

Remind myself of the big picture, take a breath, relax, and feel welcomed however I am.

4. If you haven't been attending since Covid, can you tell us what has impacted your decision?

My attendance at Church services went up markedly as we went online with services over the COVID crisis and since. It has also meant I could attend committee work more often.

I am attending more online than in person - it is incredibly convenient - and I actually end up attending more than if I was only coming in person.

For years, I sang regularly at services and beyond. Music has always been an integral part of the services. I have been very disappointed with the music programme lately. I hope that our new minister (and the Board) will do something to address this.

I have attended since Covid, but find Zoom a convenience.

I go on Zoom so I still attend.

Distance and thinking it would be better and willing to take advice of health experts and former Premier who advised "to stay the flames home."

Continued: 4. If you haven't been attending since Covid...

I have attended more frequently since COVID due to the creation of the Zoom system. That was something I liked that grew out of COVID.

Didn't care for services from Sept 2022 to June 2023.

Services not always satisfying.

I have been attending via Zoom.

I was not attending prior to Covid. I have actually attended a couple of Zoom services ... so that service is a good one in general.

Coincided with family commitment. Became a primary caretaker.

Mostly it's a busy time of life and needing space on the weekends to rest, be with family who do not attend as the weeks are quite busy.