

2009 ESUMC SURVEY

EL SOBRANTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
JULY 18, 2009

NOTE: The raw survey data is available to anyone who would like to conduct more analysis. Please contact tgradie@yahoo.com.

A NOTE ABOUT THE SURVEY

Before embarking on a journey, it is simple logic to first determine where one is now and where one wants to be at the end of the journey. Those two bits of information provide important guideposts for the rest of the journey. At ESUMC, we are embarking on a shared journey to determine where we want to be as a congregation. This survey is a first attempt at determining where we are now.

The survey committee has done its best to create a tool that provides context and orientation as we plan our journey forward, but it is not definitive. The survey is self-selected, that is, only those who really wanted to complete the survey did so. The survey was distributed over two Sundays during the 10 o'clock service, which means we haven't heard from those people who do not attend on a regular basis or have stopped attending altogether. We have not yet heard from younger members of the congregation. More than 85 percent of the respondents are 55 years of age or older.

Be that as it may, the survey does shine light on some starting points for further inquiry and action. When 74 percent of the congregation agrees that attending ESUMC worship service "adds meaning to my life", it is worth investigating the deeper meaning of that statement to discover what we are doing right and if we should be doing more of it. When nearly 40 percent of regular attendees say they first attended ESUMC because "a friend/relative invited me", that indicates a powerful tool for growing our membership.

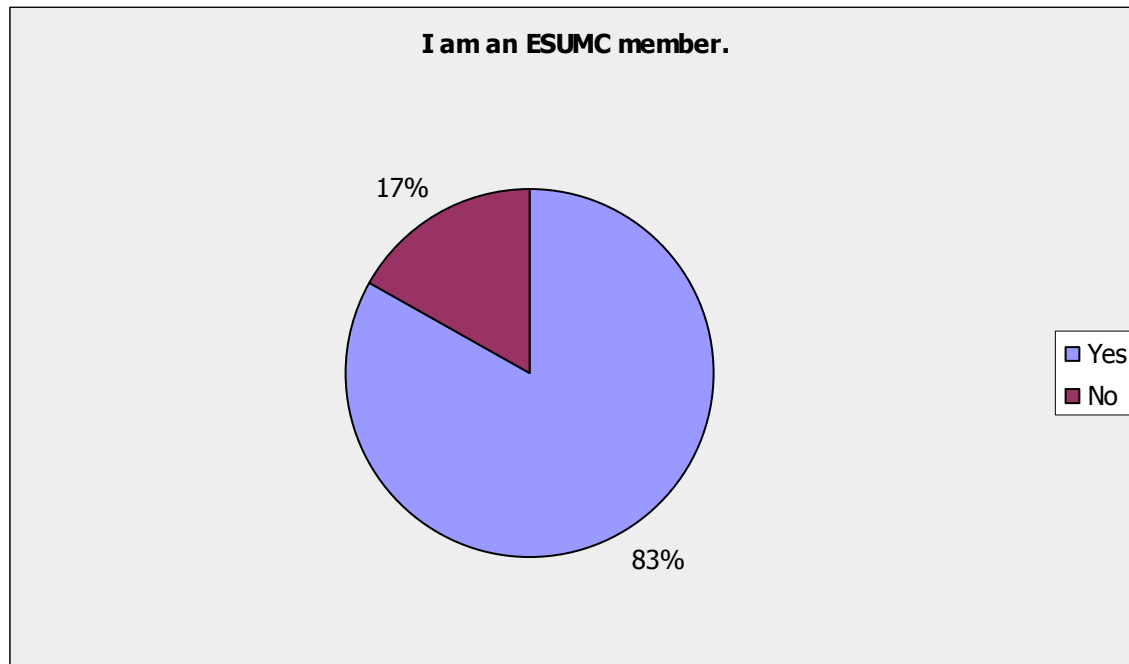
This survey should not be considered the final word on the state of ESUMC. It provides data on only a few aspects of the church that require examination and evaluation. As we proceed on our journey of "rethinking church", be prepared to ask even tougher questions of yourselves and your church.

The survey committee members included Pastor Gaye Benson, Thomas Gradie, Michelle McGoon, Marlan Shanks, Jim Shattock, and Cory Tipton.

A special thanks to the ESUMC Men's Group for asking that this survey be conducted.

Question 1

I am an ESUMC member.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	83.1%	49
No	16.9%	10
<i>answered question</i>		59
<i>skipped question</i>		3

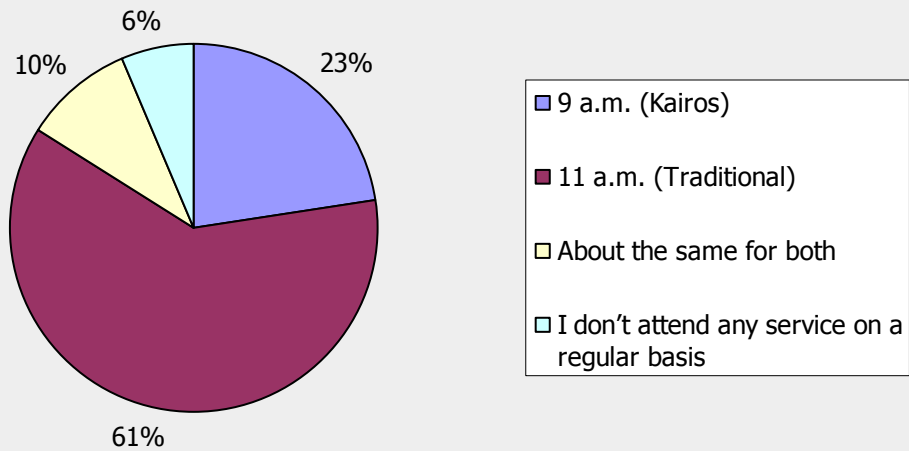


Question 2

The service I attend most often is:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
11 a.m. (Traditional)	61.3%	38
9 a.m. (Kairos)	22.6%	14
About the same for both	9.7%	6
I don't attend any service on	6.5%	4
answered question		62
skipped question		0

The service I attend most often is:



Question 3

I attend ESUMC services because... [Check all that apply]		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
it adds meaning to my life.	74.1%	43
I like the music.	70.7%	41
it fulfills my spiritual needs.	69.0%	40
I like the sermons.	63.8%	37
it is relevant to my life.	62.1%	36
it is inspirational.	58.6%	34
it makes me a better person.	58.6%	34
like to hear about who needs my prayers.	48.3%	28
my friends go there.	48.3%	28
it is educational.	46.6%	27
provides opportunities for me to serve the community.	46.6%	27
I like to socialize.	39.7%	23
it's fun.	29.3%	17
it's a quiet time.	27.6%	16
it's an exciting time.	22.4%	13
old habits die hard.	19.0%	11
Other	15.5%	9
<i>answered question</i>		58
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Other (please specify)

My family are members

It's a job.

I also enjoy the option of the 9 o'clock service and the band music.

The Kairos service with it's fun upbeat music and casual atmosphere uplifts my spirits.

It doesn't "fulfill my spiritual needs", but is part of my spiritual program

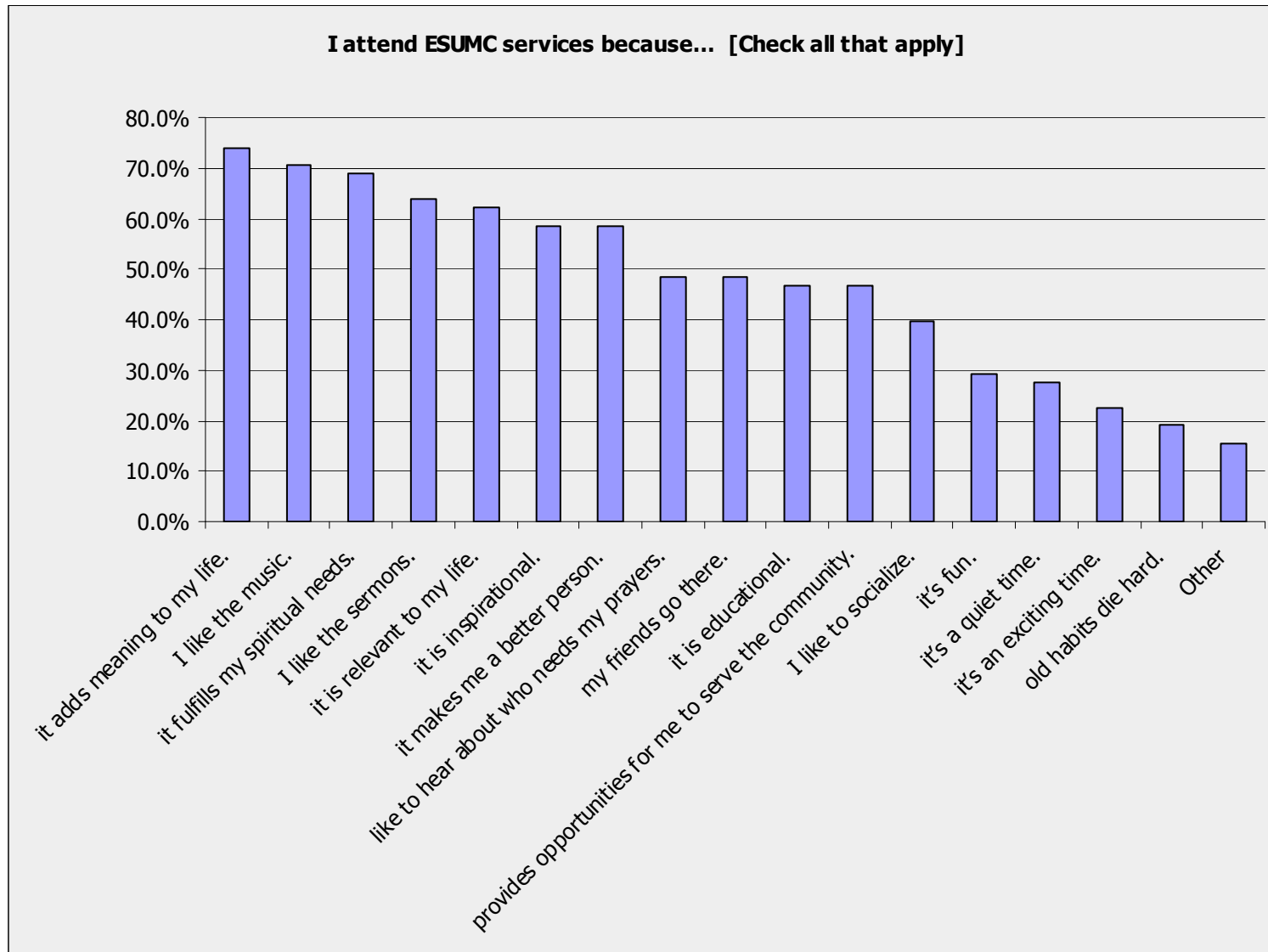
spouse prefers methodism ---

Also my parents go too so I have to go too.

Worship the Lord

I like some of the music.

Question 3 (continued)



Question 4

Please finish the following sentence by checking all the items that apply to your thoughts and feelings about ESUMC: I don't attend ESUMC on a regular basis because... (check all that apply)

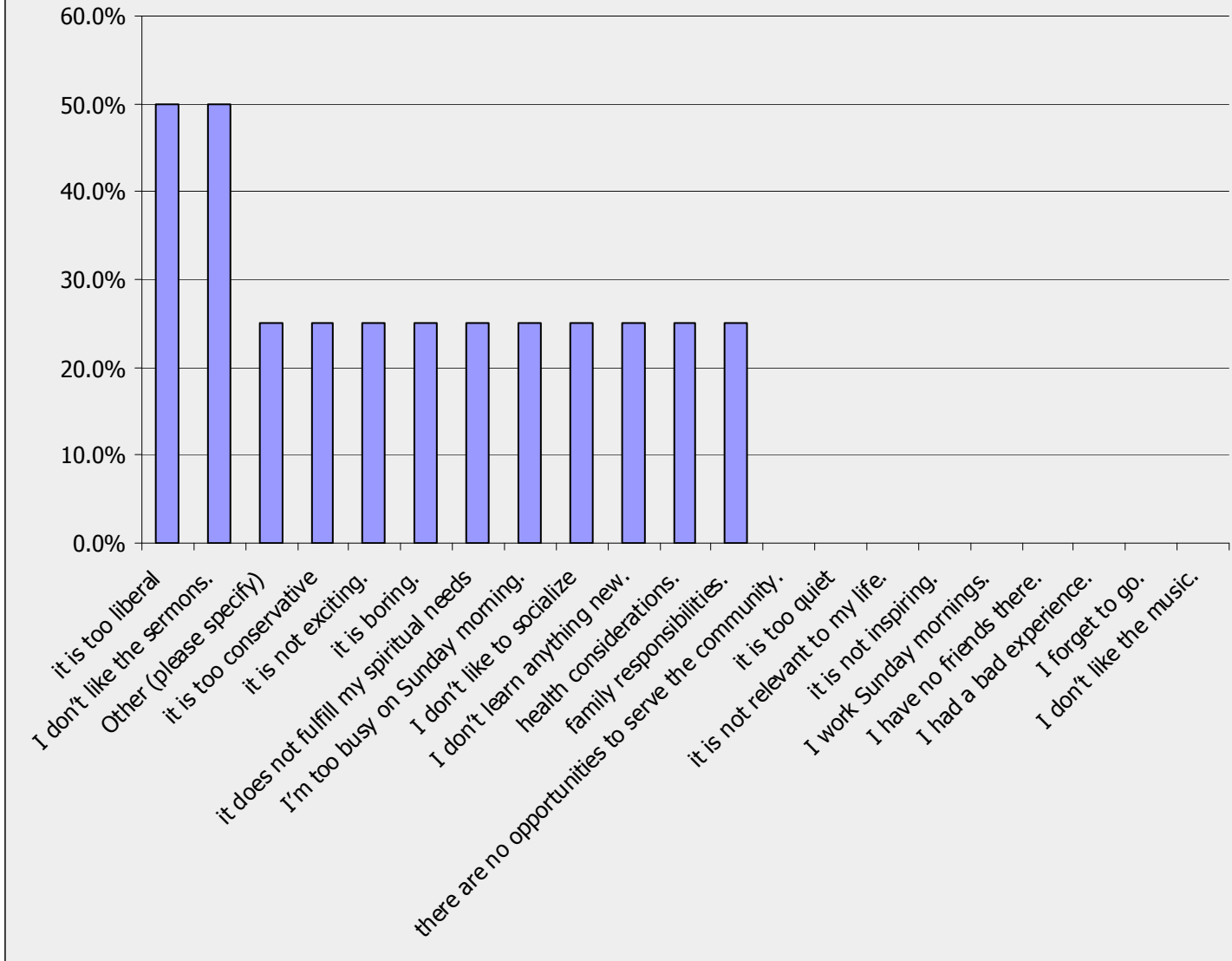
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
it is too liberal	50.0%	2
I don't like the sermons.	50.0%	2
it is boring.	25.0%	1
it is not exciting.	25.0%	1
it does not fulfill my spiritual needs	25.0%	1
I don't like to socialize	25.0%	1
it is too conservative	25.0%	1
I don't learn anything new.	25.0%	1
I'm too busy on Sunday morning.	25.0%	1
family responsibilities.	25.0%	1
health considerations.	25.0%	1
Other (please specify)	25.0%	1
I don't like the music.	0.0%	0
it is too quiet	0.0%	0
it is not inspiring.	0.0%	0
it is not relevant to my life.	0.0%	0
I have no friends there.	0.0%	0
there are no opportunities to serve the	0.0%	0
I forget to go.	0.0%	0
I had a bad experience.	0.0%	0
I work Sunday mornings.	0.0%	0
answered question		4
skipped question		58

Other (please specify)

Service too long - 1-1/2 hours +

Question 4 (continued)

Please finish the following sentence by checking all the items that apply to your thoughts and feelings about ESUMC: I don't attend ESUMC on a regular basis because... (check all that apply)



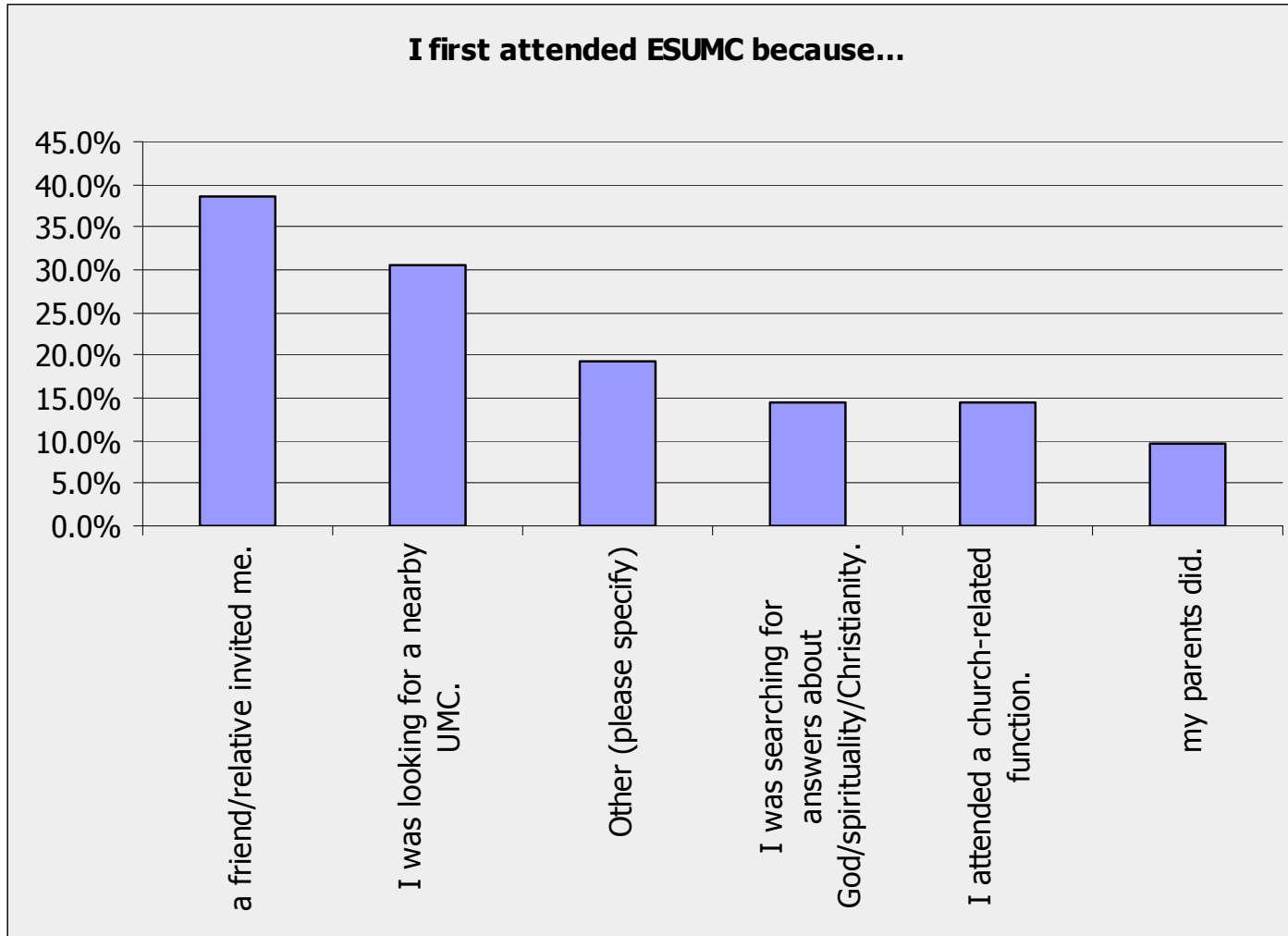
Question 5

I first attended ESUMC because...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
a friend/relative invited me.	38.7%	24
I was looking for a nearby UMC.	30.6%	19
Other (please specify)	19.4%	12
I was searching for answers about God/spirituality/Christianity.	14.5%	9
I attended a church-related function.	14.5%	9
my parents did.	9.7%	6
answered question		62
skipped question		0

Other (please specify)

I was looking for a nearby church.
 I was looking for a nearby church.
 Because I needed a church
 Was shopping around. Visited. A member recognized me as visitor,
 invited me to coffee time in KH and introduced me to others, who
 were friendly.
 Its the church I grew up in
 I met members at a joint choir concert.
 I was looking for a nearby church
 I wanted to give my young child a spiritual foundation
 had attended when a teen for a while
 I was looking for a place that had programs for our young children.
 I wanted to find friendship and social oportunities in a christian
 setting
 Just dropped in for worship
 I was looking for a nearby church

Question 5 (continued)



Question 6

Here are some words and phrases that some people feel describe ESUMC. Please check all the words and phrases you believe describe ESUMC.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Friendly	93.5%	58
Caring	71.0%	44
Spiritual	71.0%	44
Clean	58.1%	36
Open	56.5%	35
Member-oriented	48.4%	30
Creative	43.5%	27
Child-friendly	41.9%	26
Fulfilling	40.3%	25
Important	40.3%	25
Attractive	38.7%	24
Community-oriented	37.1%	23
Motivating	37.1%	23
Organized	35.5%	22
Meditative	32.3%	20
United	32.3%	20
Theologically liberal	30.6%	19
Old	17.7%	11
Outward looking	16.1%	10
Stagnant	14.5%	9
Other (enter as many descriptors as you want)	14.5%	9
Growing	12.9%	8
Status quo	12.9%	8
Inward looking	11.3%	7
Cliquish	9.7%	6
Divided	9.7%	6
Theologically conservative	9.7%	6
Authentic	8.1%	5
Disappointing	8.1%	5
Pentecostal	1.6%	1
Young	1.6%	1
Cold	0.0%	0
Loud	0.0%	0
Unfriendly	0.0%	0
Unimportant	0.0%	0
answered question		62
skipped question		0

Other (enter as many descriptors as you want)

great pastor and lay ministers.

Disorganized. Theological -- Don't know what.

Creative with music programs and special holiday services.

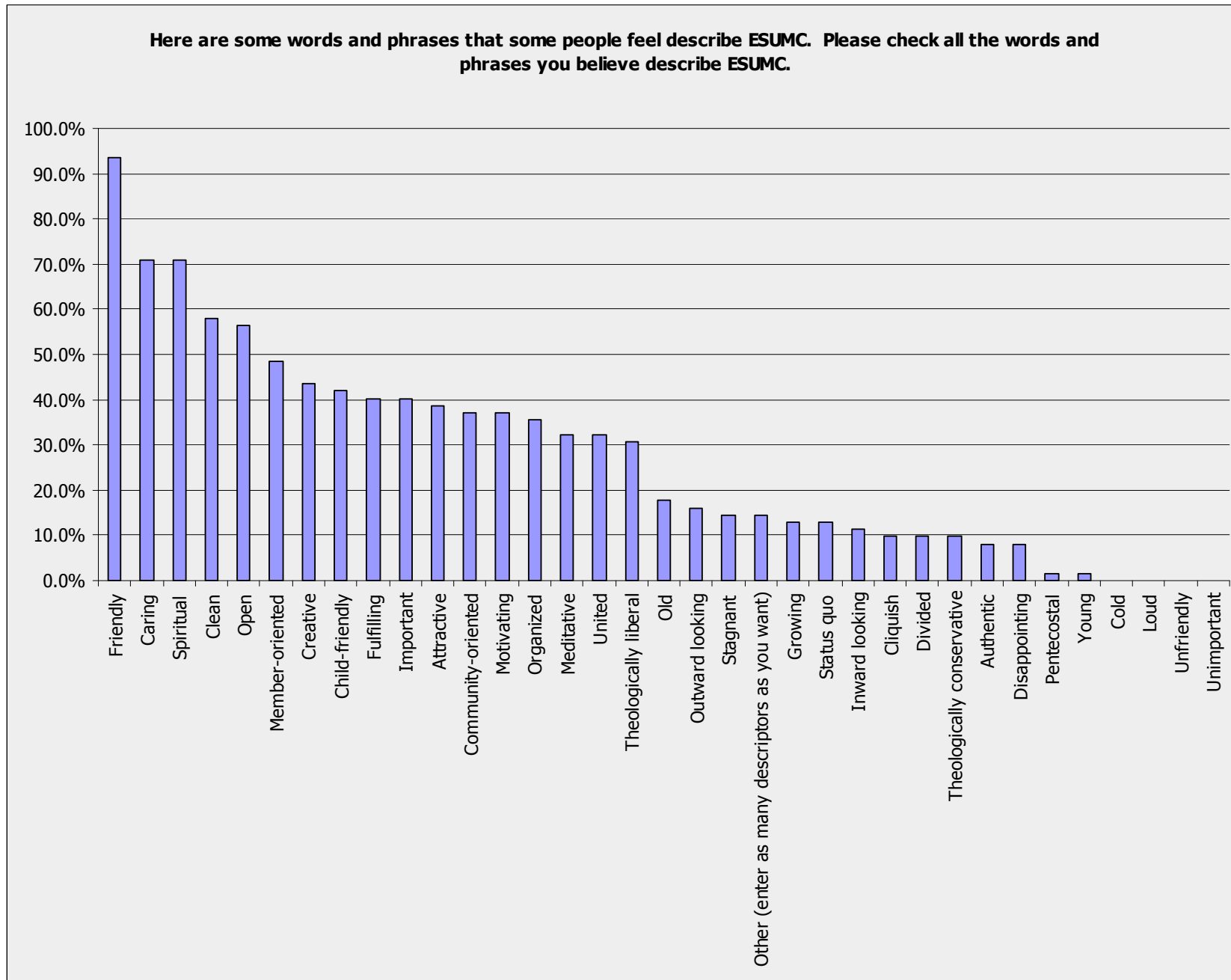
I'm sure many other Christian churches would say you're liberal, but I find ESUMC to be moderate not relevant; not 21st century

They have hearing aids. Which is good, so they can hear what the people say.

Lacks clear goals & objectives, resistant to change, leadership that blocks progress.

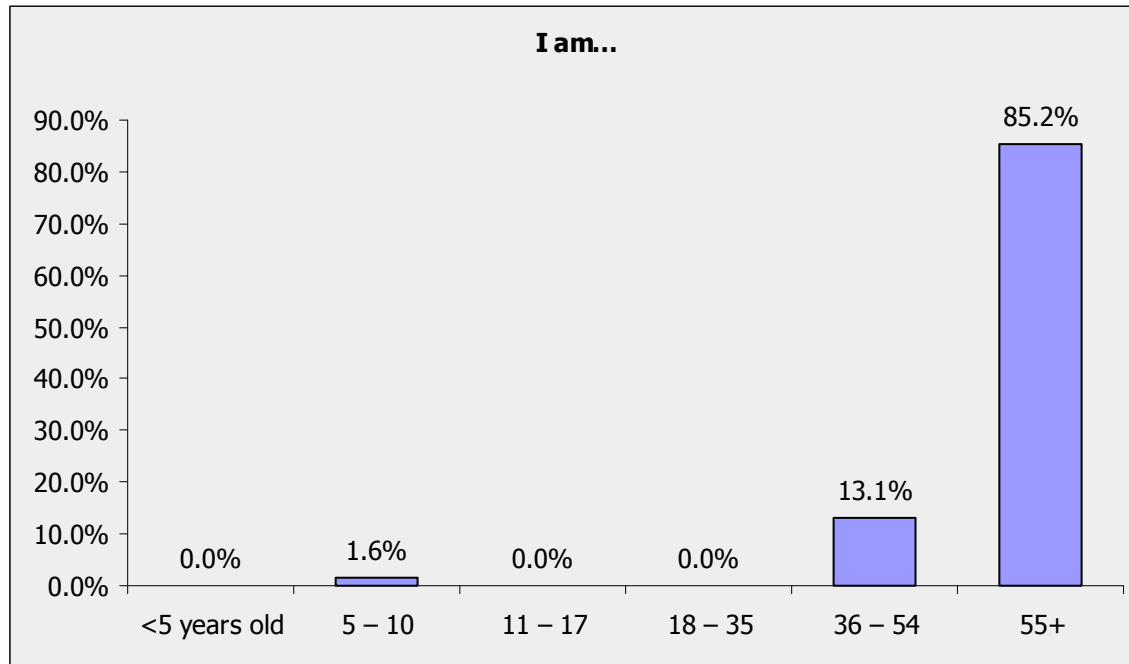
theologically a little less than liberal, creative but only by a few, lacking social opportunities in smaller group form, good study groups/workshops, very creative/art oriented -- music, stain glass windows, grounds, needs a garden.

Question 6 (continued)



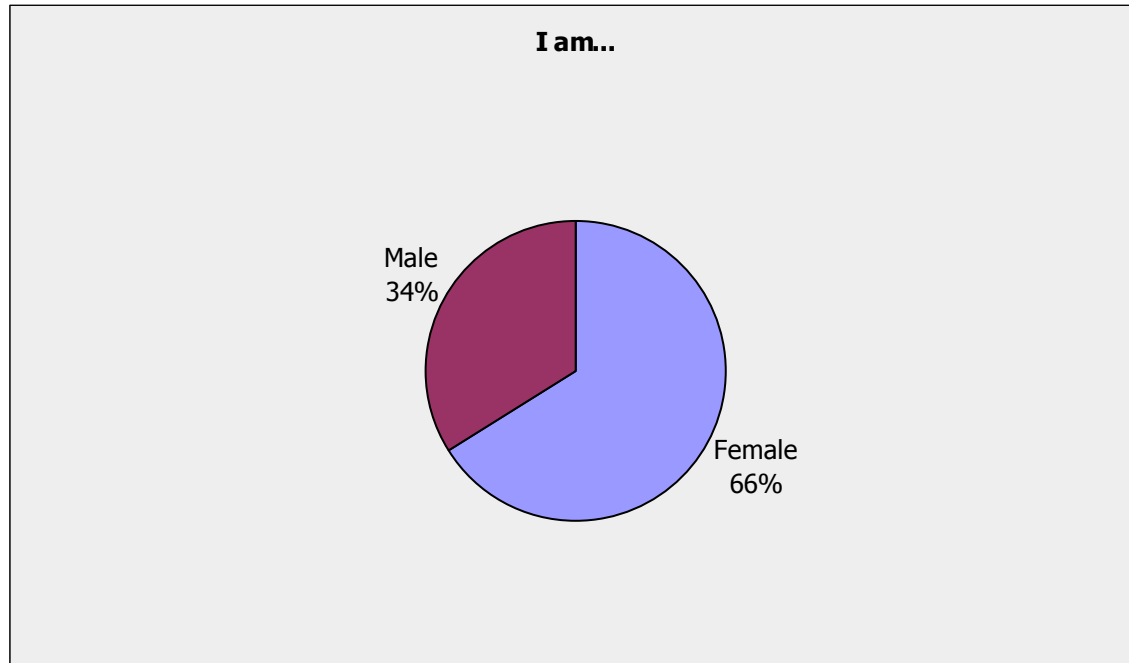
Question 7 Optional - Age

I am...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
<5 years old	0.0%	0
5 – 10	1.6%	1
11 – 17	0.0%	0
18 – 35	0.0%	0
36 – 54	13.1%	8
55+	85.2%	52
answered question		61
skipped question		1



Question 8 Optional - Gender

I am...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Female	66.1%	41
Male	33.9%	21
<i>answered question</i>		62
<i>skipped question</i>		0

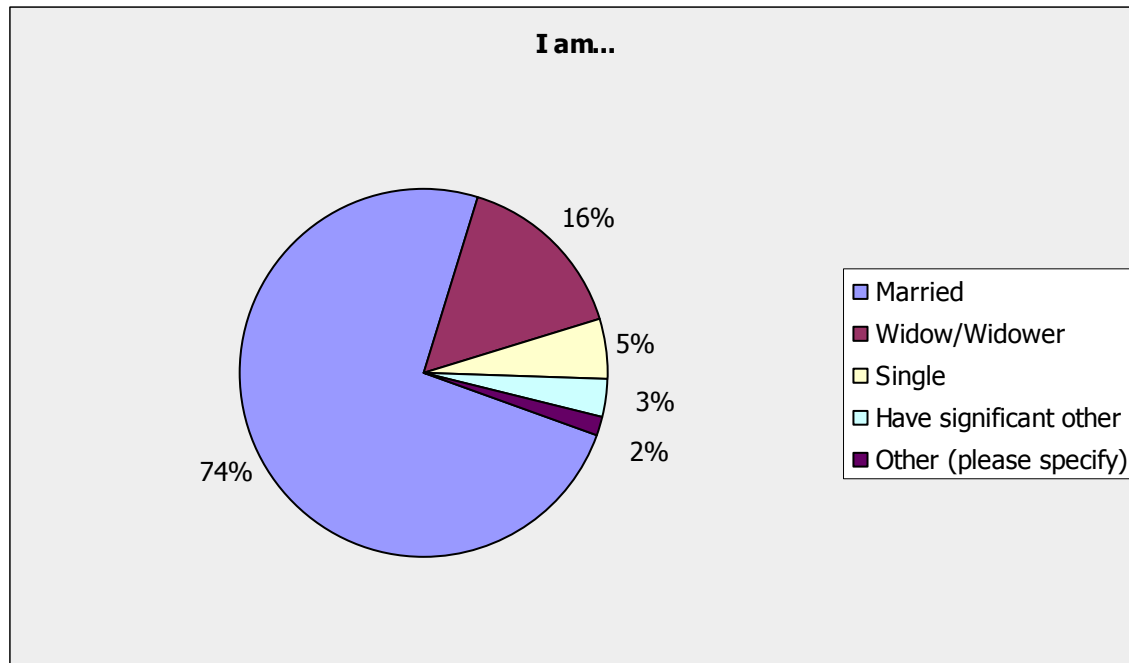


Question 9 Optional – Marital Status

I am...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Married	74.1%	43
Widow/Widower	15.5%	9
Single	5.2%	3
Have significant other	3.4%	2
Other (please specify)	1.7%	1
<i>answered question</i>		58
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Other (please specify)

I'm a kid

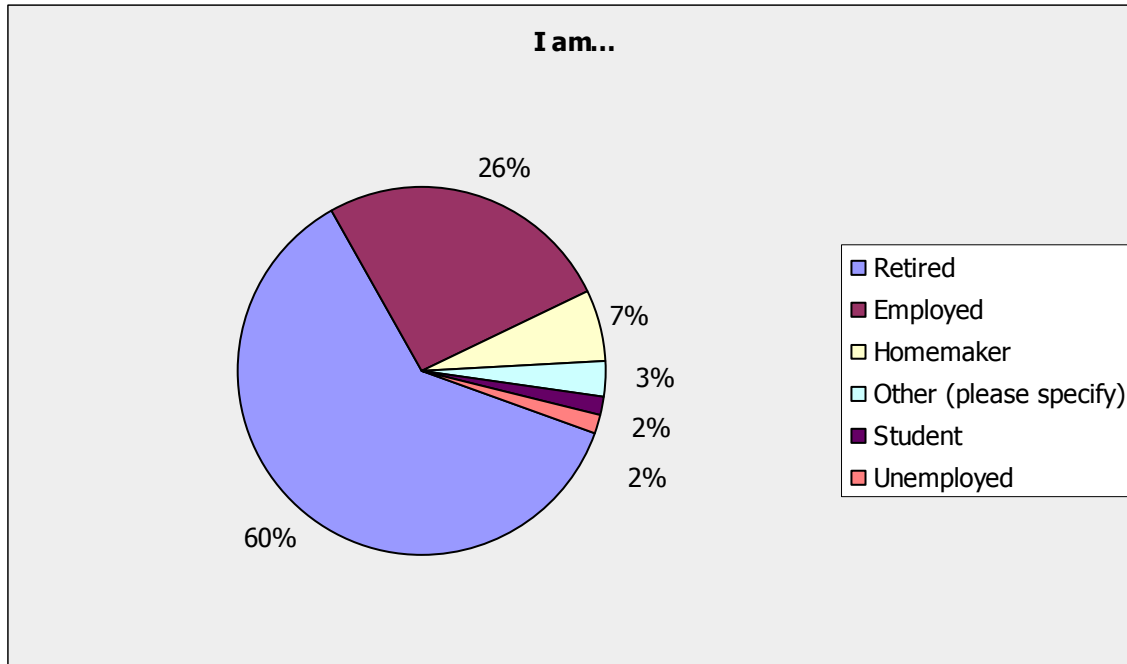


Question 9 Optional – Employment Status

I am...		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Employed	25.8%	16
Homemaker	6.5%	4
Retired	61.3%	38
Student	1.6%	1
Unemployed	1.6%	1
Other (please specify)	3.2%	2
answered question		62
skipped question		0

Other (please specify)

partial employed
 All the above & active artist, social work



Question 12 Optional

Please add any additional comments you would like to make about the survey or ESUMC.

- 1 I thought one of the questions would address one service. Other - I would prefer one service. I am sure any problems of a combined service can be addressed.
- 2 Would like one combined service
- 3 Combine services to 1 service. Attend 11 a.m. because I sing in the choir. I enjoy one service (summer). I enjoy seeing the congregation full. I see people I don't see during the second service.
- 4 don't attend on regular basis because of family responsibilities; I am too busy on Sunday morning.
- 5 I like the early service & might not continue to attend a later more traditional service.
- 6 I look forward to the retreat and its results!
- 7 Too much music program in both services: too many hymns/selections, too many verses. Need 'guest' speakers on varying topics
- 8 the church needs to seriously look to the needs outside the church & needs to be more inclusive
- 9 The social activities we have are usually attended by the same people and those folks always sit with the same folks that they sat with the last time and all the times before that. We are friendly and open to people when they first visit-- they come - but then - how do we really get to know each other if the same little groups are always together. for that matter what about people who are already a part of the church but are on the outer edge of involvement. how are these people going to stay at esumc if there is not a better effort to create community? The little cliques of people seem friendly but the seldom include new folks in their group. maybe they are the more assertive people and they are able to find each other. SO what can esumc do to bring others together and make them feel like there is a place for all.
- 10 I have visited other churches and their contemporary programs are very different [from] what we CALL contemporary. Young adults I have spoken with think our 9 AM service is old fashioned as far as the music goes. Yes it has an up beat, but a lot of the tunes are old, from when the 35 yr. olds were in middle school. ESUMC needs to take advantage of the

talented voices of some of our young people... Some music that I have heard is words from older hymns but set to a modern style of instrumentation. You can still find the old tune but it's new. Like jazz takes a standard song and changes it to sound like jazz. How about if we find a student minister of music to bring real contemporary music to our 9 am service. I'm not sure I would attend often because I still enjoy the choir but I would certainly support it by coming at the beginning. I have 30ish aged people in my life that have given me their opinion so I pass this along...

- 11 We were first active here and then found a need at PUMC but love this church also.