

2020 Pulse Survey Report



Word cloud summarizing results of open-ended question around what ERUUF is doing well

A report provided by the Committee on Evaluation of Ministry

Members: Julie Edmunds (Chair), Steven Franklin, Pam DiLavore, Nancy Henley, Helen Wolfson

Overview of Pulse Survey

What is the Pulse? Over the past 12 years, ERUUF members and friends have completed an annual survey known as the Pulse of the Congregation, administered by the Committee on Evaluation of Ministry. The survey includes closed-ended questions that ask respondents to rate their experiences at ERUUF and the quality of ERUUF's activities. These results are compared to results in previous years to identify trends over time. The survey also includes two open-ended questions that ask respondents to describe in their own words what is going well and what needs work. These open-ended responses are analyzed to identify themes. Additional questions may also be added that focus on specific areas of interest; in 2020, there were specific questions relative to the music program. There was a total of 240 respondents.

It is important to note that the survey was administered prior to COVID-19; results would likely be different if we were to administer it today. However, we believe the findings are still relevant.

How are the Pulse data used? The graphs and the summary of the open-ended comments are shared with the Board and ERUUF staff, who use it in their planning. The report is also shared with the broader congregation in a variety of ways, including through the website, at the annual meeting, and through leadership forums.

An important note about individual comments: The Committee on Evaluation of Ministry (CEM) reads every single comment and codes them to identify themes mentioned by multiple individuals. These themes are then shared with the staff, along with sample comments to illustrate the theme. It is not necessarily possible for staff or programming to address every individual comment, because they are trying to meet the needs of the many different members and guests of the Fellowship.

What do the 2020 results show? As you will see in the detailed charts and comment tables, there is a general sense that ERUUF is an exciting and vibrant place to be.

Areas of strength flagged in the survey included:

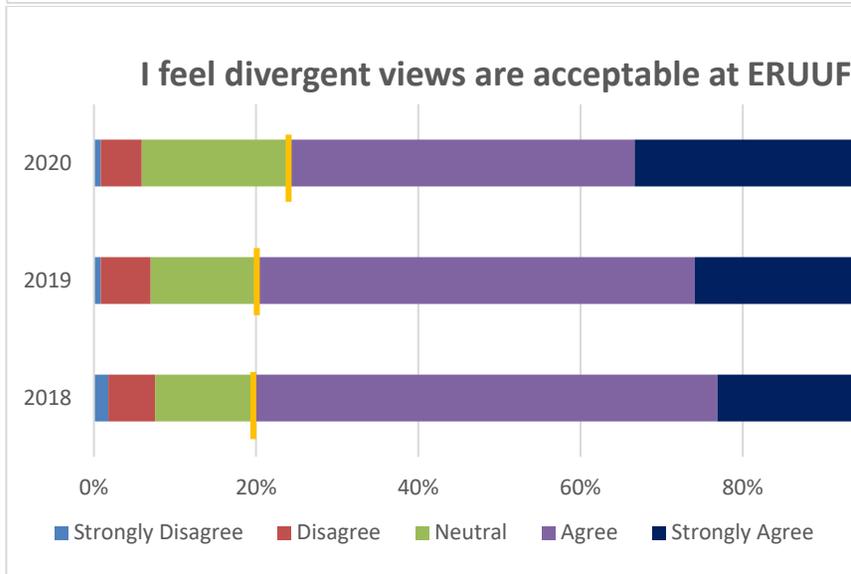
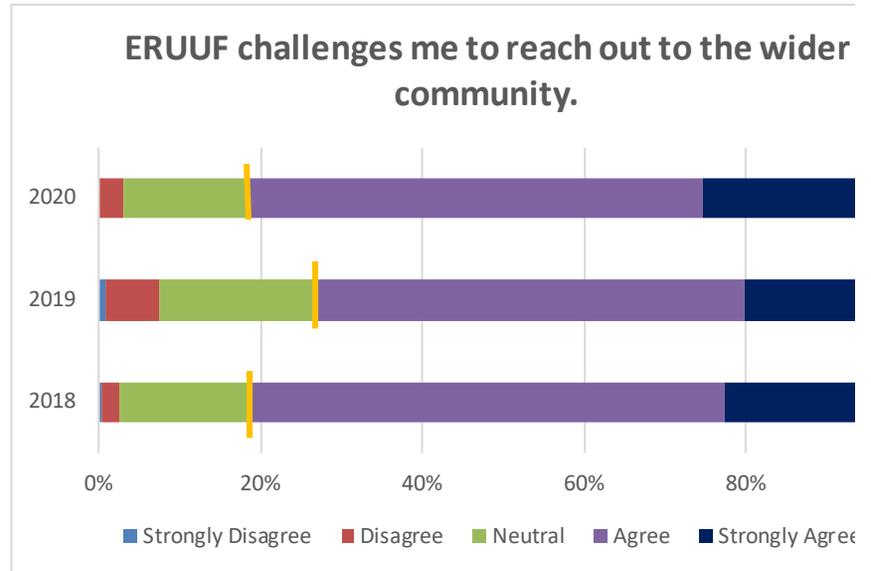
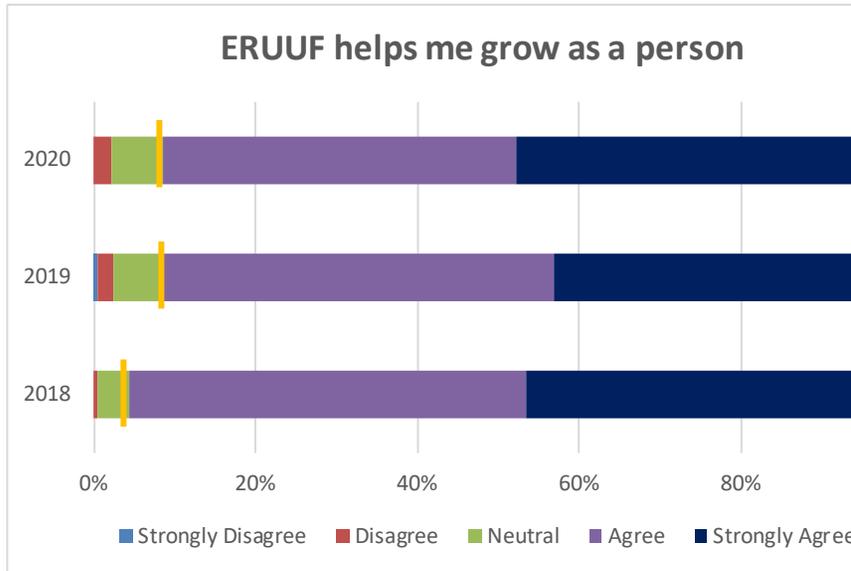
- Sunday morning worship and the ministerial team are areas of strength. As one member said, “Worship services are inclusive and inspiring.”
- Integration of new members has continued to improve. Individuals commented on the value of the Inquirers series.
- Religious education for adults is improving with a range of new programming offerings.
- People generally see the music program as strong and diverse but there are some concerns about the need for permanent leadership.
- Comments indicated that participants appreciated the ERUUF’s work around multiculturalism, diversity and racial equity.

The survey also identified some potential areas for attention, including:

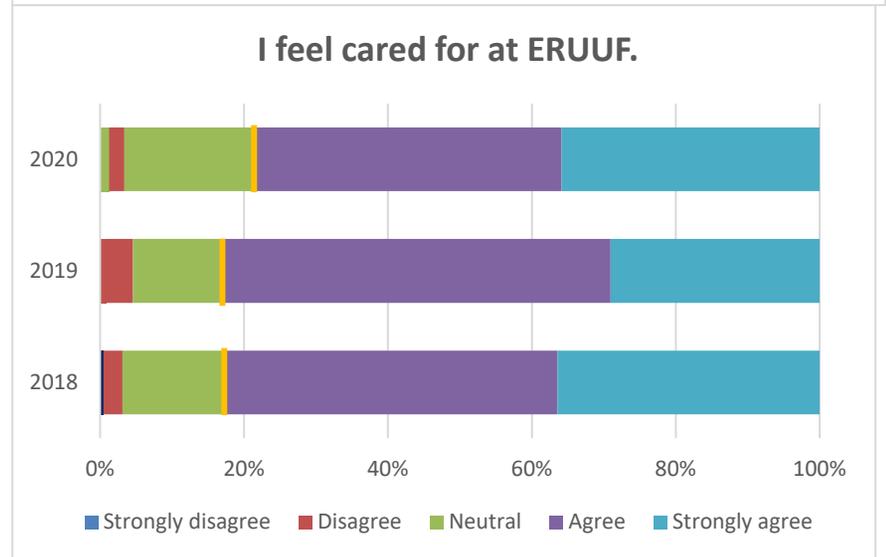
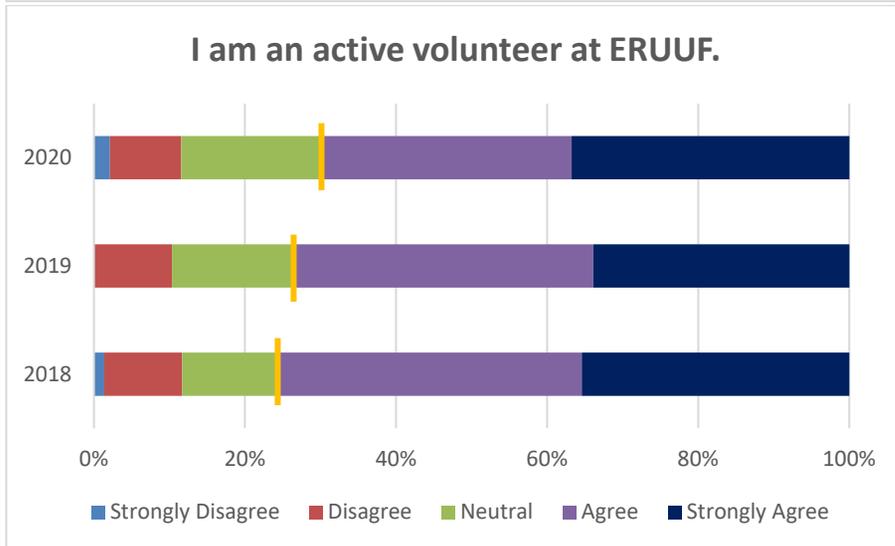
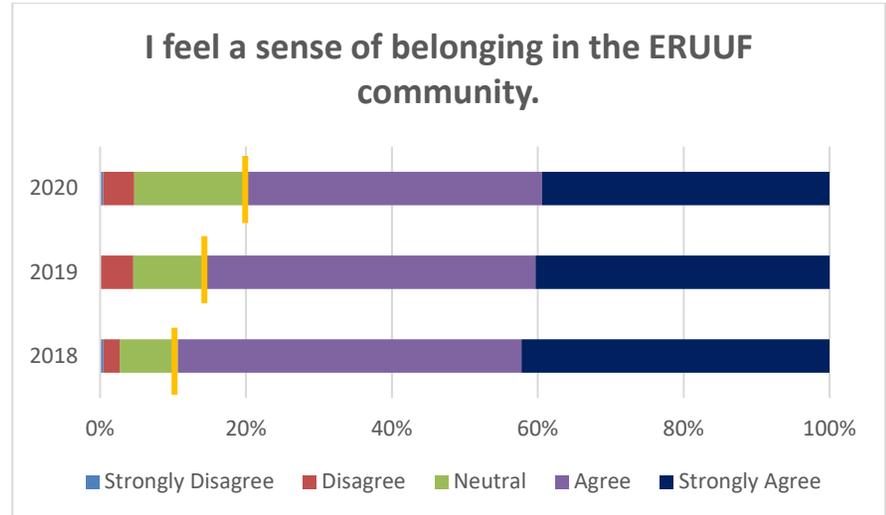
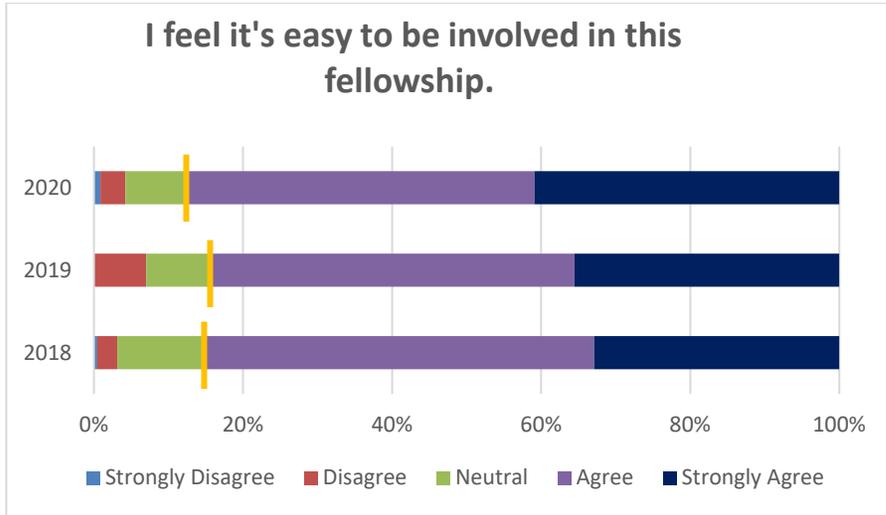
- Areas that have represented consistent challenges for ERUUF include multigenerational activities and external publicity.
- There is an increase in the percentage of people who don’t know about RE for Children and Youth. This should be coupled with an examination of enrollment trends.
- An increasing number of people indicate that they do not know about the Board of Trustees or Financial Management and Stewardship. 2018 was particularly high due to the Capital Campaign but the decline suggests the need for continuing communication and visibility in these areas, given that the congregation funds and governs itself.
- The top three areas in diversity that people indicated need attention include: economic status, race/ethnicity, and political perspective. Related to the last one, there was also a slight decline in people who found divergent views to be acceptable, accompanied by some comments about overly political views from the pulpit.

The charts show responses to the questions with rating scales. Most charts have results for the last three years included. A yellow line separates positive responses from neutral or negative responses.

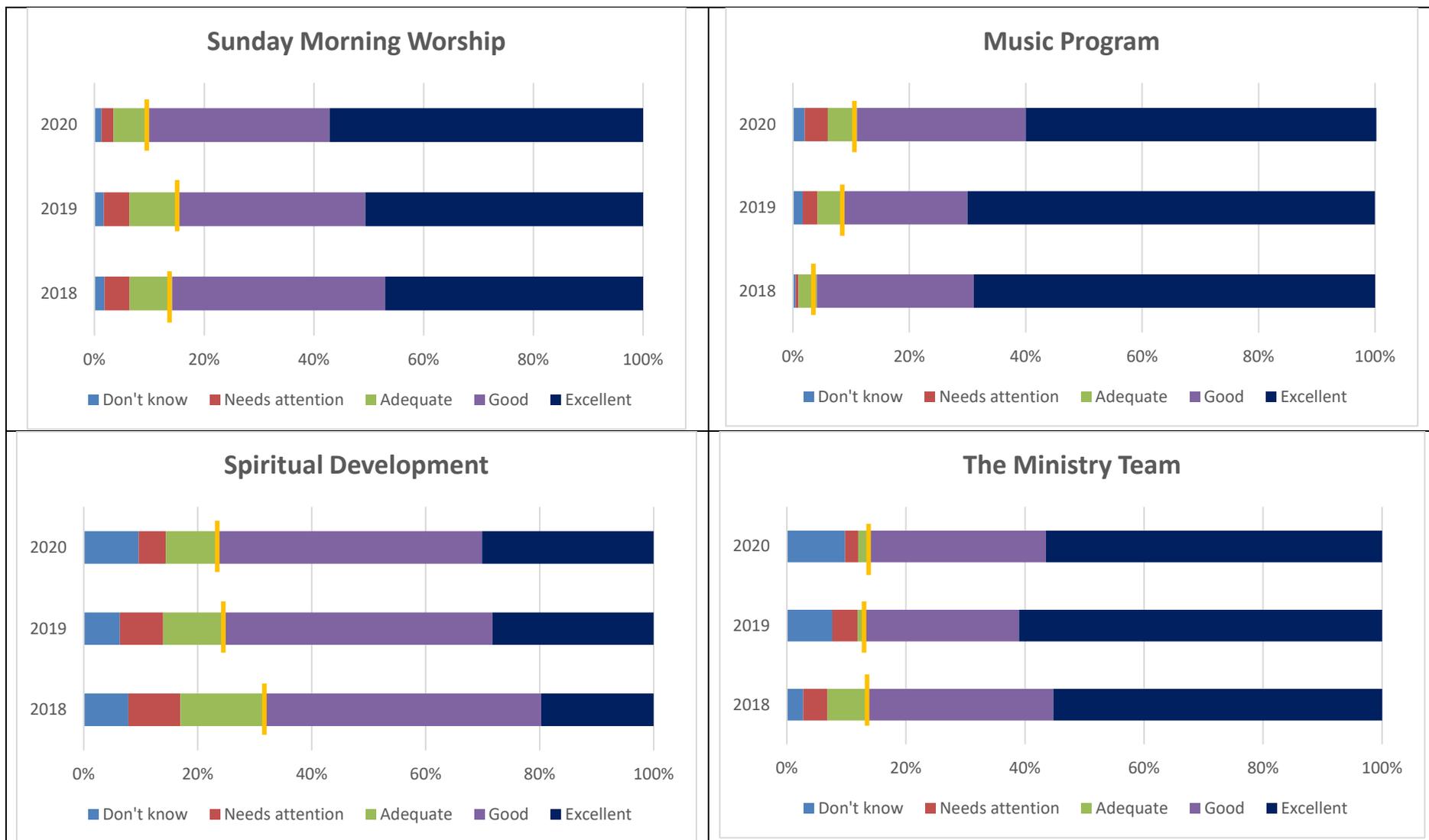
Personal Growth at ERUUF



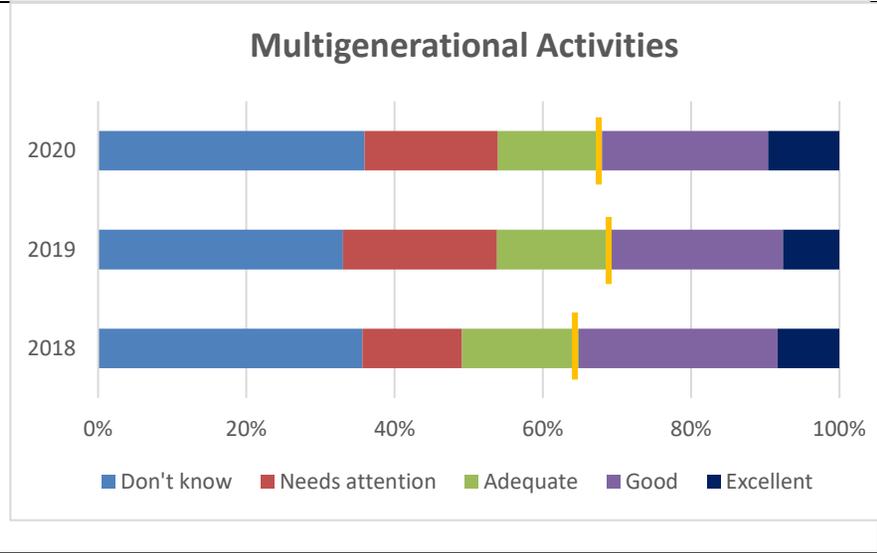
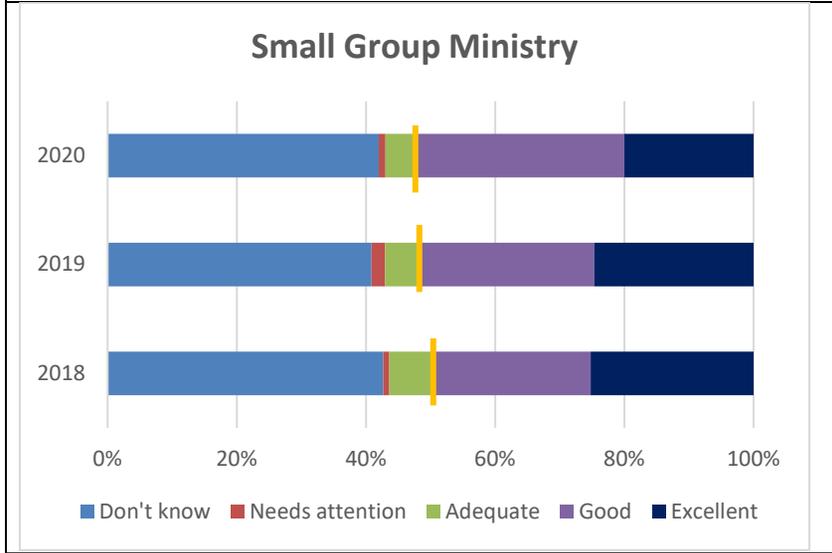
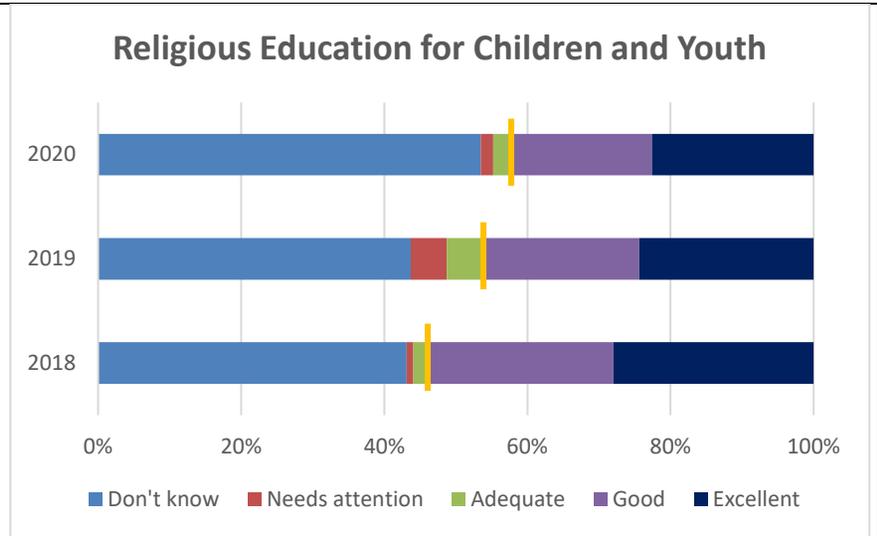
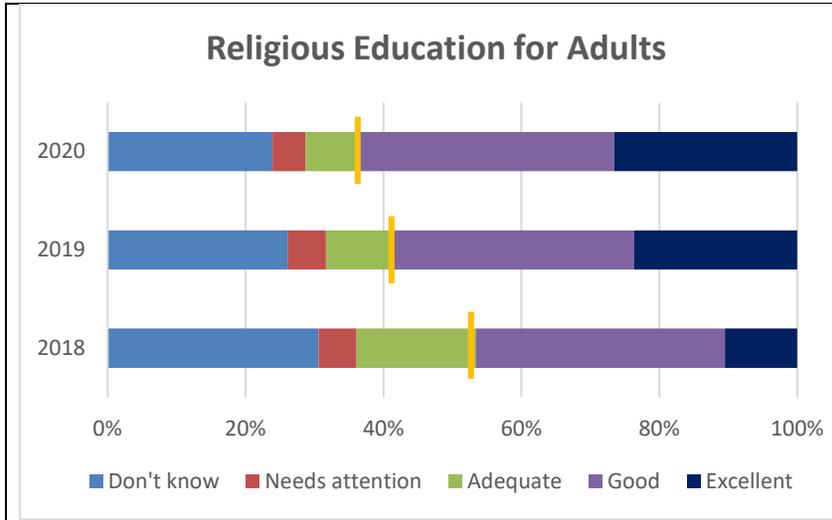
Involvement and Caring at ERUUF



Sunday Morning and Spiritual Development

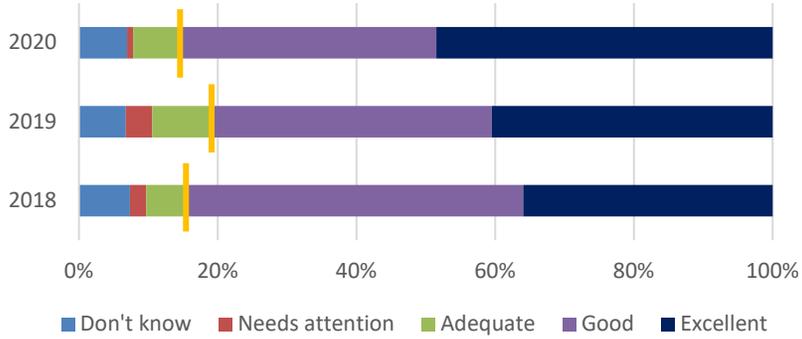


Religious Education for Youth and Adults

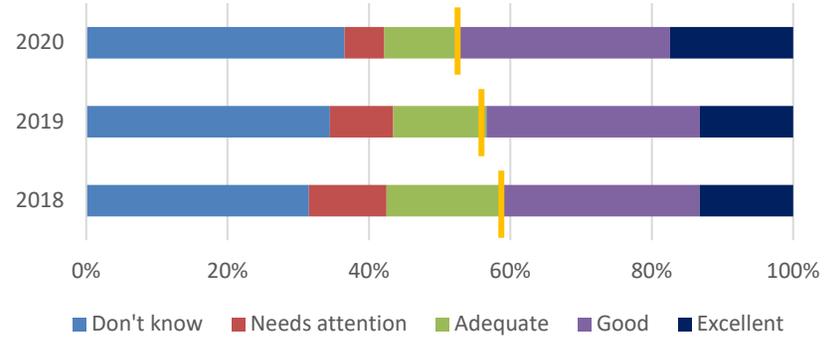


Social Justice and Involvement

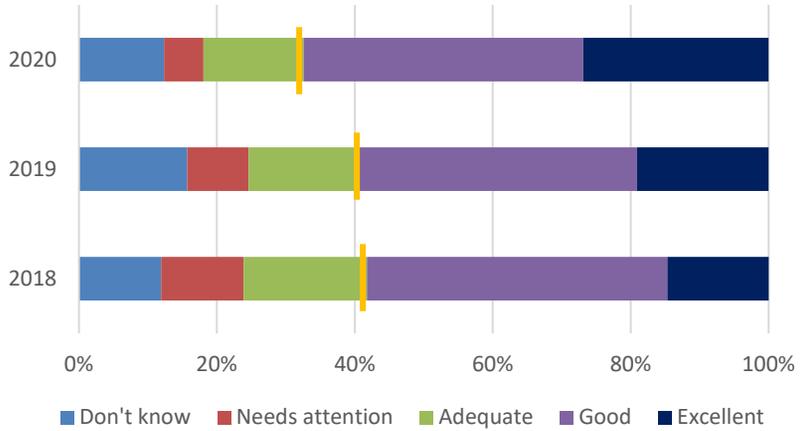
ERUUF's Engagement in Justice Activities



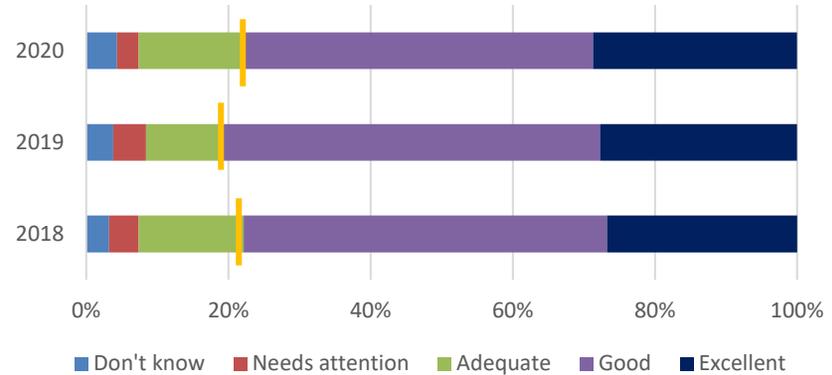
Volunteer Coordination



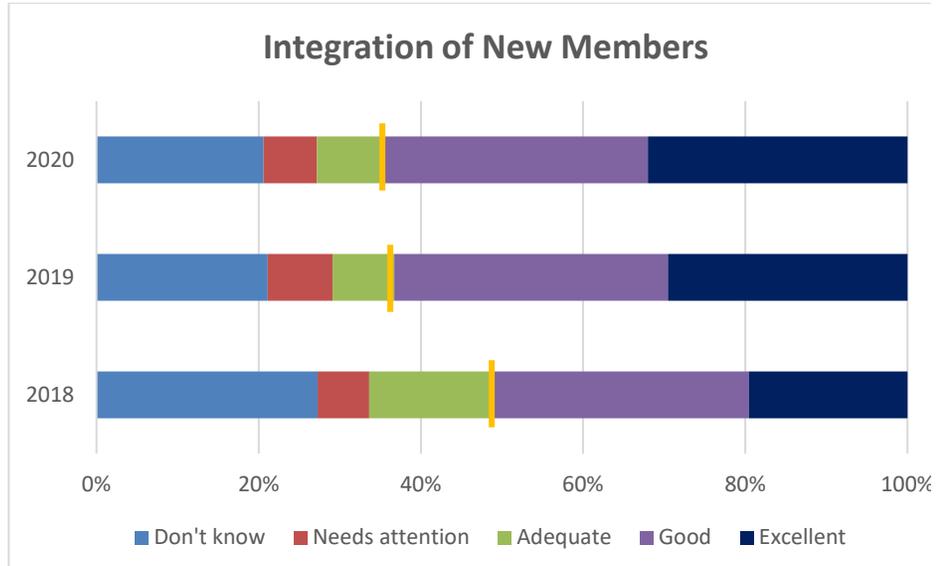
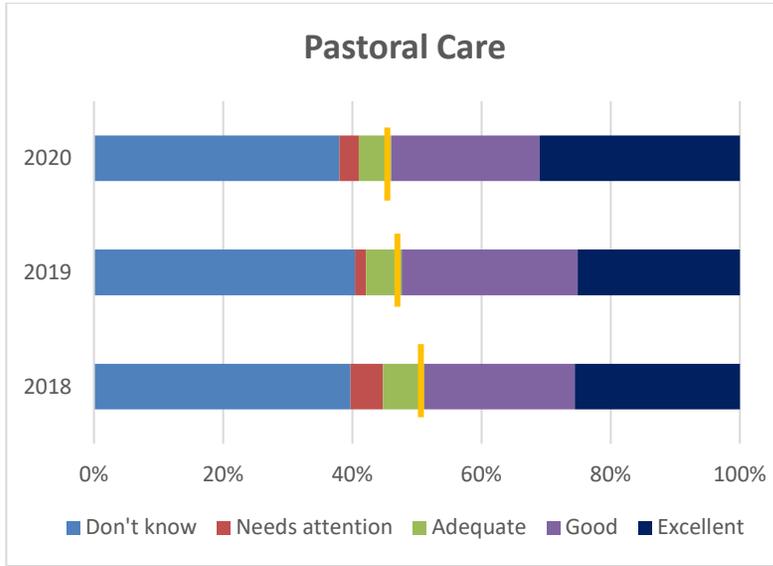
Engagement in the Wider Community



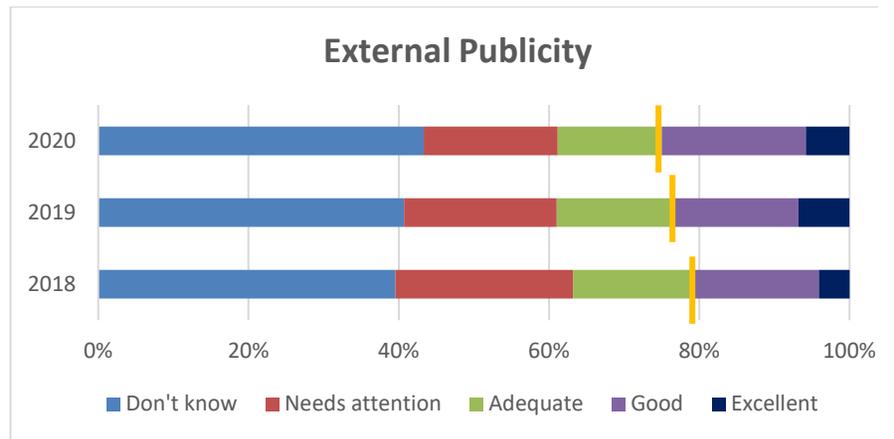
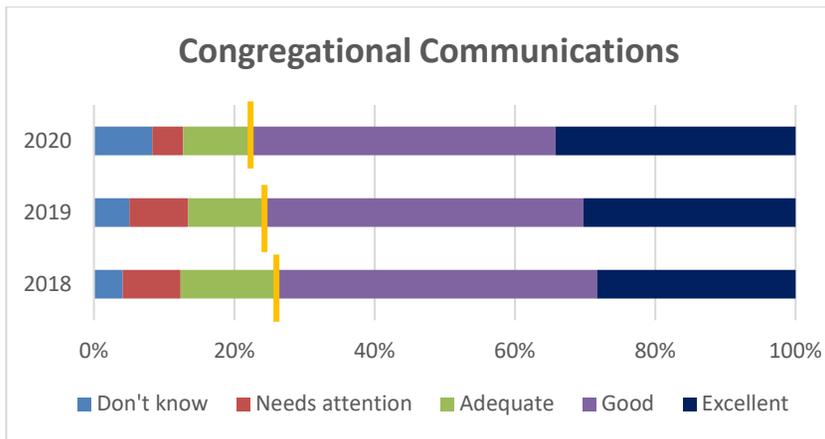
Coffee Hour



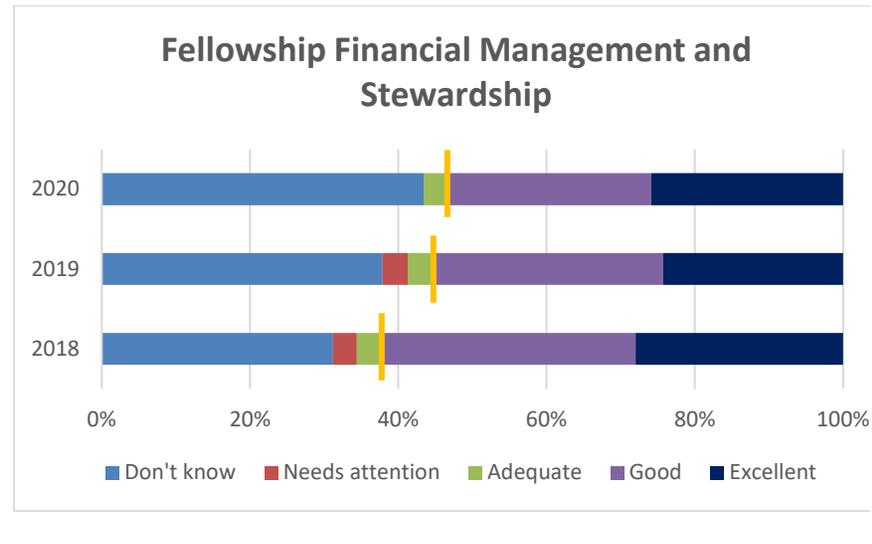
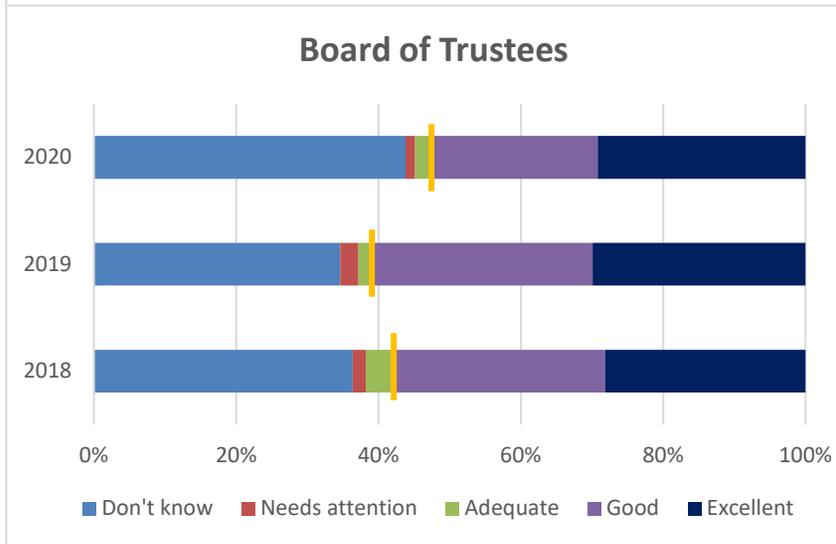
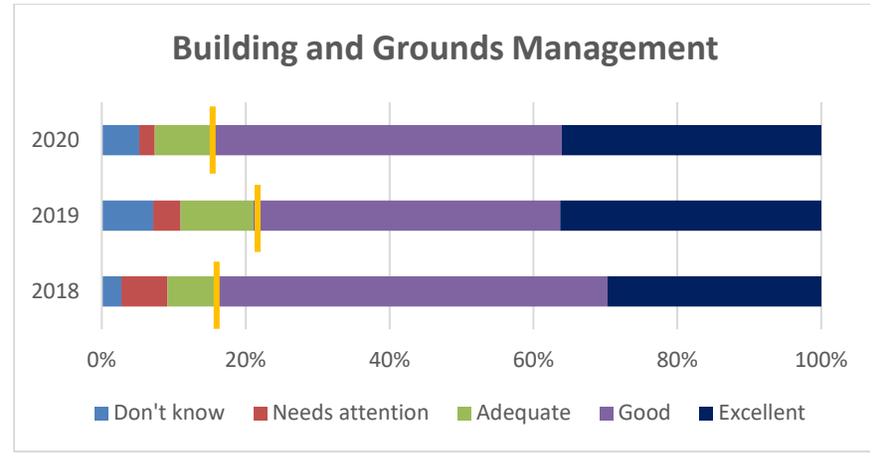
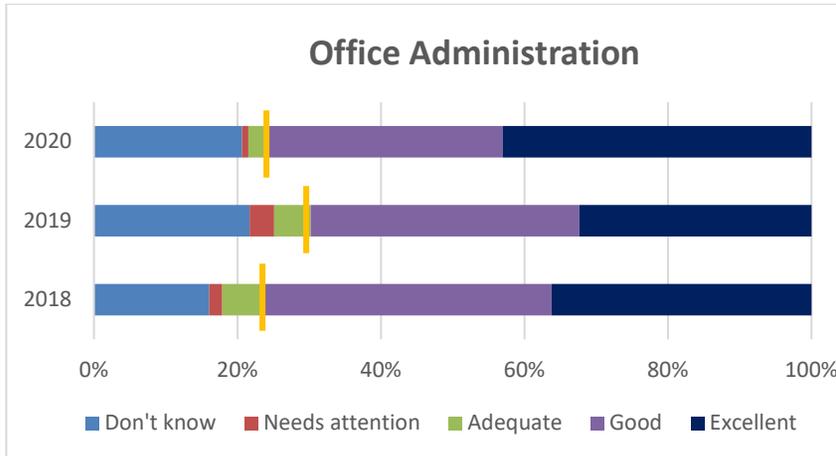
Caring and Integration



Communications

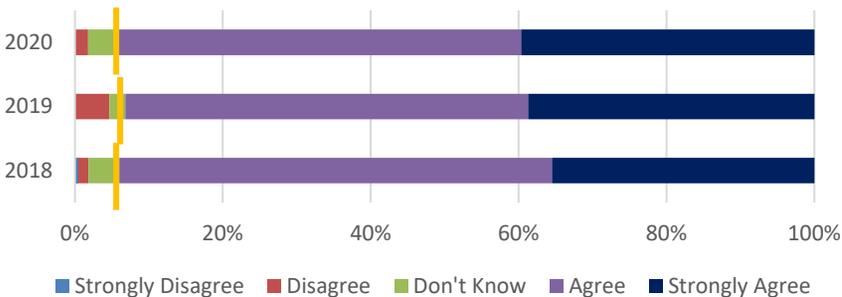


Management, Administration and Stewardship

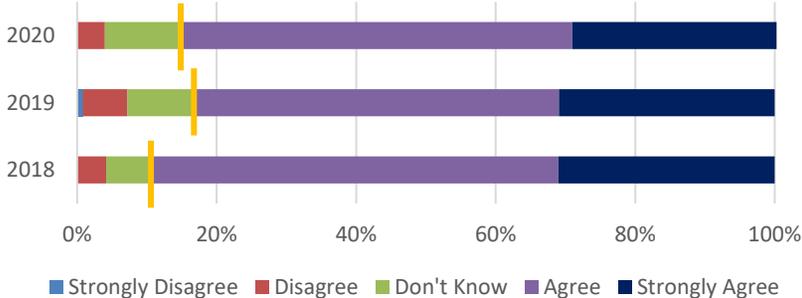


Commitment to ERUUF

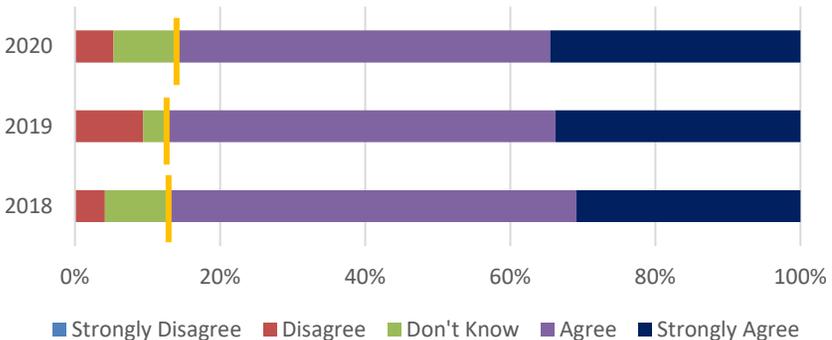
At ERUUF, the culture encourages members of the Fellowship to give generously of their time and talents.



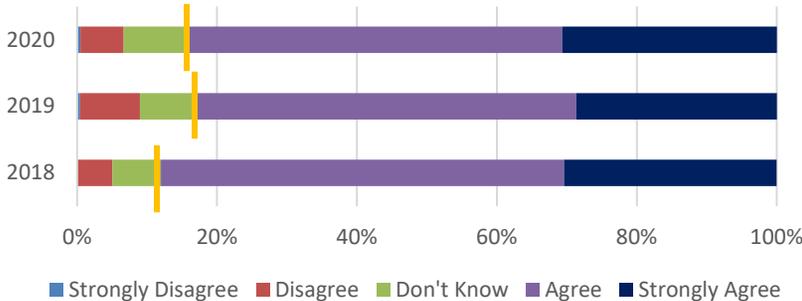
At ERUUF, the culture encourages members to make significant financial contributions (relative to their means) to support ERUUF



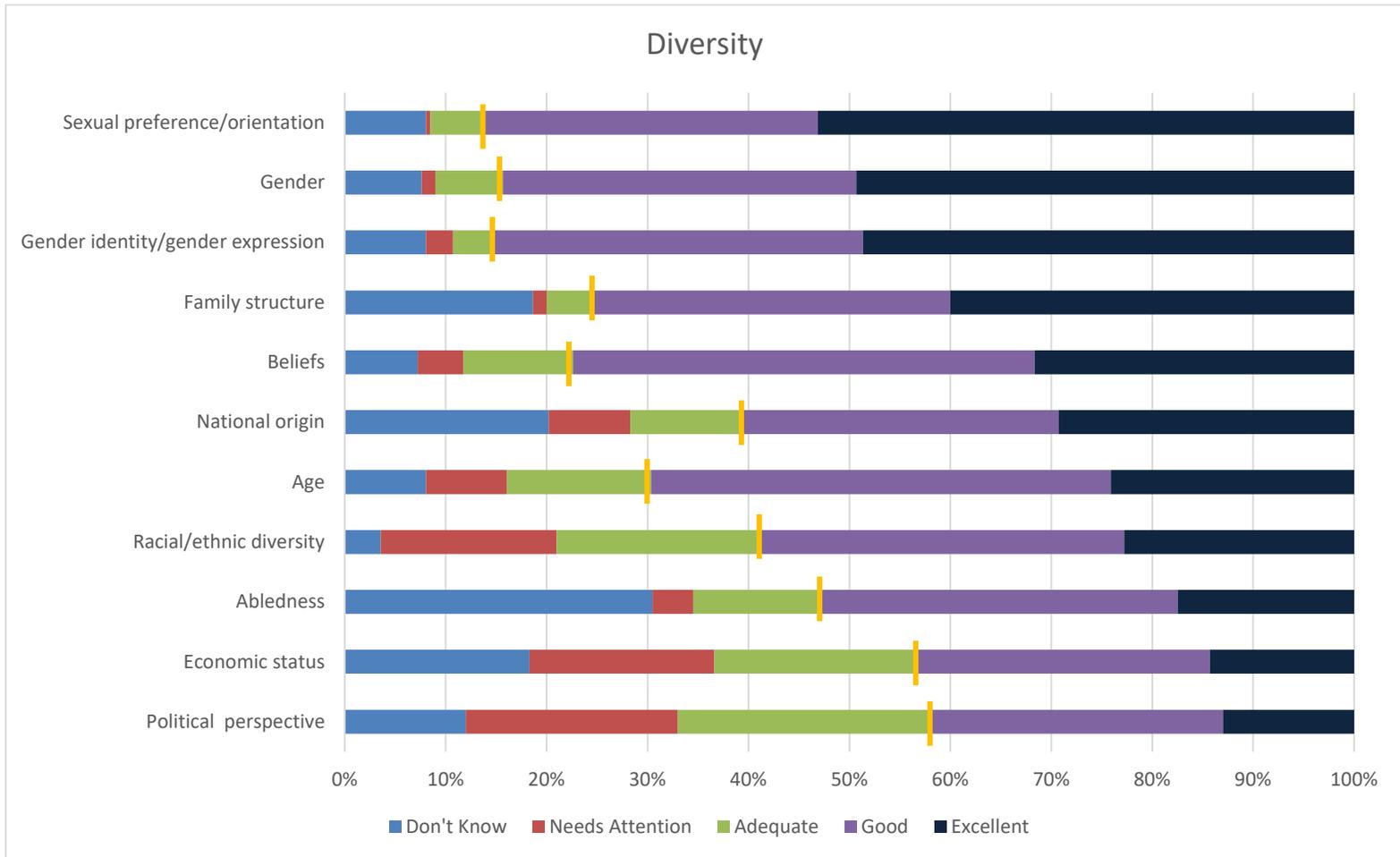
Supporting ERUUF with my time and talents is a priority for me.



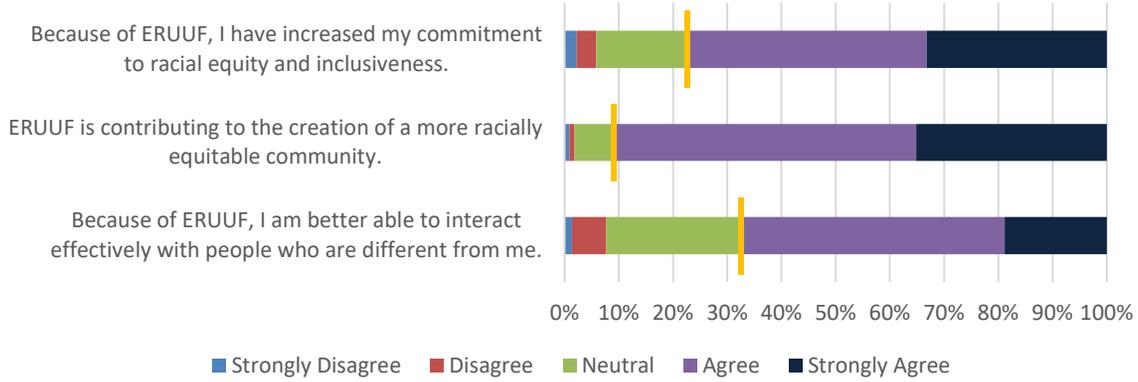
Supporting ERUUF financially is a priority for me.



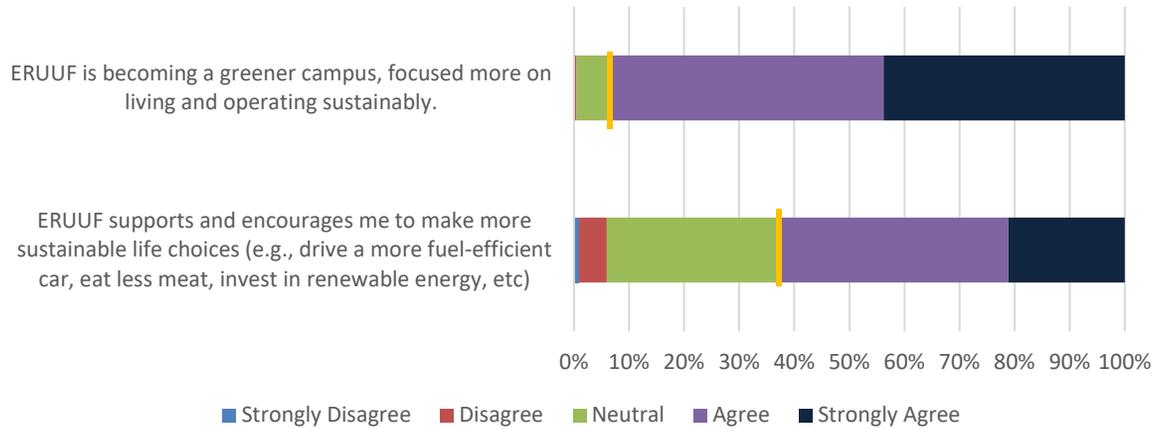
Diversity



Progress toward Racial Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Goals

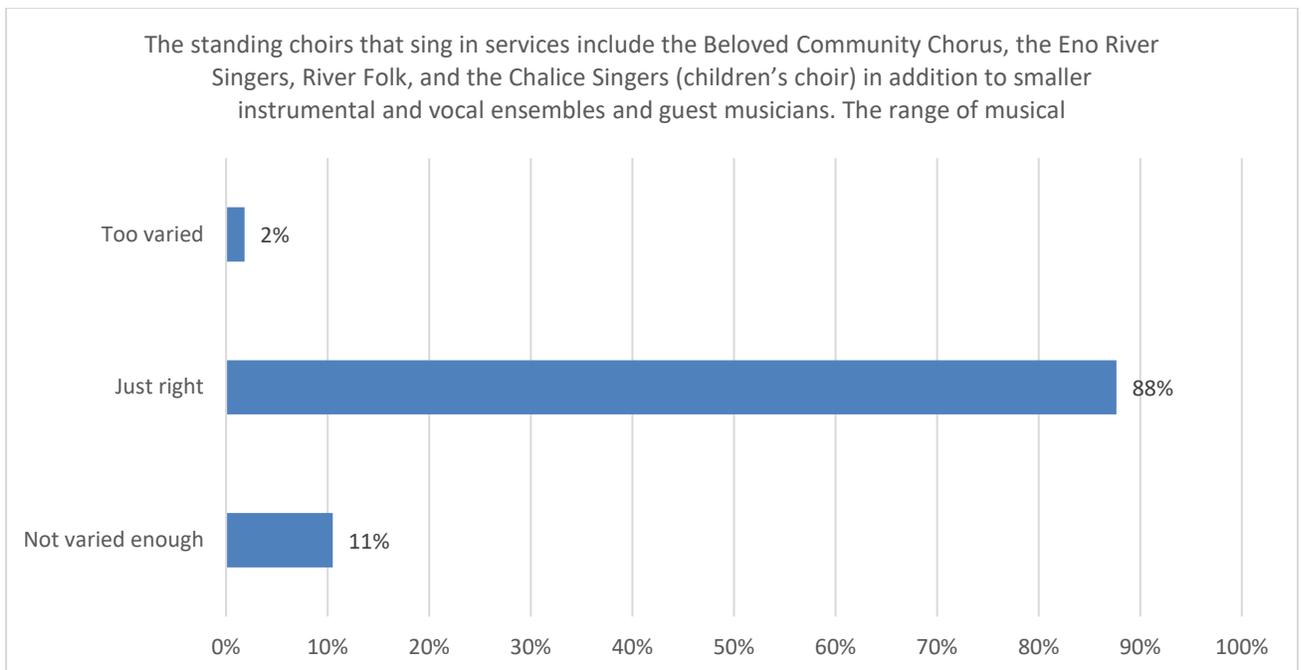
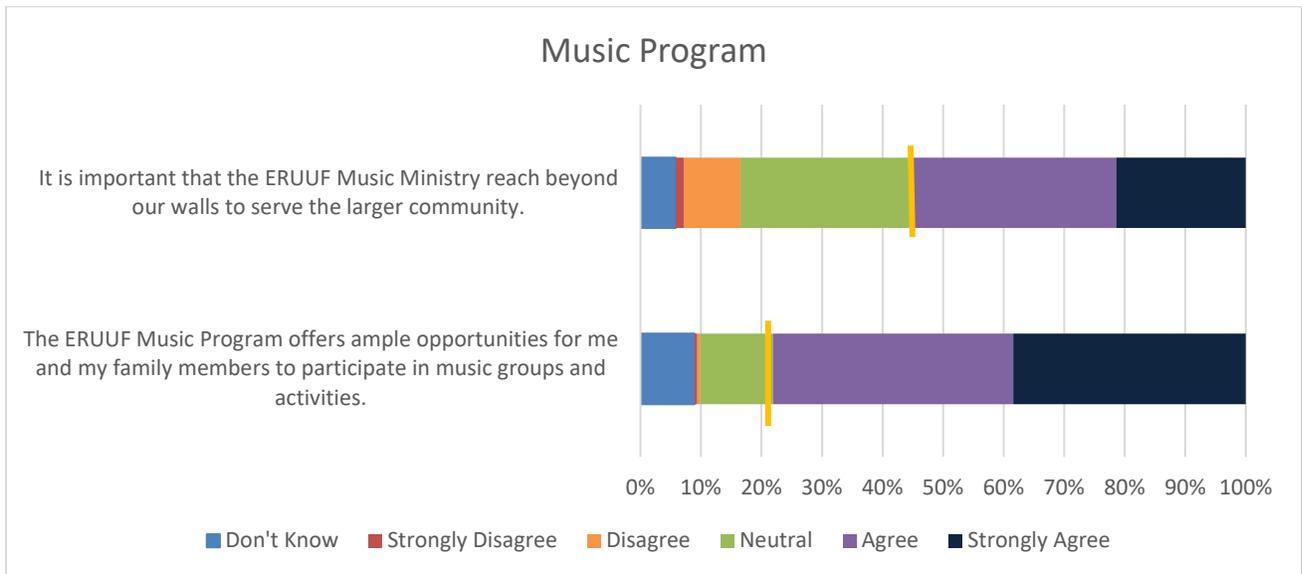


Progress toward Earth Justice Strategic Plan Goals



FEEDBACK ON MUSIC PROGRAM

ERUUF is undergoing a re-envisioning of its music program this year. As a result, we asked three additional questions to inform this work.



Who answered the survey in 2020?

A total of 240 respondents

Membership status: 87% were members, 11% were not; 1% did not know.

Length of involvement:

- 36% had been involved more than 15 years
- 24% had been involved for 6-15 years
- 18% had been involved for 3-5 years
- 13% had been involved for 1-3 years
- 9% had been involved less than a year

8% identified as an individual of color

Age:

- 1% were under 21.
- 12% were between 22 and 40
- 34% were between 41 and 65
- 45% were between 66 and 80
- 7% were over 80

Approximately 71% lived closer than 9 miles and 8% travelled more than 15 miles.

15% had a child participating in RE; 4% had a child of RE age who was not participating in RE.

What is Going Well at ERUUF in 2020

Summary of Responses: Out of 240 respondents, 159 wrote specific comments about what is going well. Areas that were going well included efforts to be multicultural and diverse; engaging with the community and social justice work; worship; music; and welcoming new members. Responses mentioned by five or more people are included below.

Theme	Number	Subthemes	Sample comments
Multiculturalism/ Diversity	46	Welcoming environment, inclusion, gender identity, Kwanzaa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multicultural efforts have improved our diversity of worship services and membership. • Reaching out to minorities and younger people • Racial diversity is improving. • Commitment to diversity of Sunday morning services in terms of member participation, music, content and themes. • ERUUF is committed to being a welcoming congregation for people of color. Through observation, it seems like there is more "racial/ethnic" diversity in terms of new visitors.
Community Engagement	44	Social and political justice/change; community outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making us alert to the wider issues of Durham and those fighting for justice. • Working in coalition with other orgs; inviting people of various racial background; recognizing and using the talents of the congregation; diverse activities; challenging the status quo; not afraid of discomfort if needed for progress... • A thriving, dynamic, active community with many engagements in community and social justice needs/organizations. Thank you!!
Worship	40	Sermons, child stories, personal reflections, Jazz Vespers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jazz Vespers are amazing. • Worship services are inclusive and inspiring. • Sunday services are varied in content, music, and style, and both of our ministers as well as the visiting ministers are excellent and inspiring. • We really enjoy Sunday Service. • Sunday services are a good balance of challenging to be better and healing
Music	38	Beloved Community Chorus, Sunshine Kids, Chalice Singer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music is engaging and much more diverse than in the past, especially thanks to the Beloved Community Chorus. • The variety of music in the worship services is great; the quality of the music is usually good and often great! It is wonderful to have more than one adult choir singing in the services • The inclusion of children in the services is good - stories every week and children's choir singing fairly regularly.

Theme	Number	Subthemes	Sample comments
Welcoming new members	29	Inquirers Series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing excellent adult religious education options for newcomers and long-time members. I'm especially impressed by how much participation there is by visitors and newcomers in these programs. • ERUUF has clearly become more friendly to visitors and new members. • ERUUF is growing when other congregations are challenged • ...robust path to membership program...
Adult programing	22	Leadership development, adult RE, small groups ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing excellent adult religious education options for newcomers and long-time members. • The new adult programming has been excellent; all high quality. There are more options than ever. • The small group ministry is very well run and popular.
Racial Equity (efforts specifically mentioned as opposed to broader efforts around diversity or multiculturalism)	18		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making racial equity and inclusion a priority and providing opportunities for members and friends to grow in this area. This includes opportunities for conversations and interactions across racial lines, for those who choose to engage. • I am very proud of what we're doing in our emphasis on racial equity and educational efforts to support this vision. The sustainability improvements are good ones.
Ministerial Leadership	16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...both of our ministers as well as the visiting ministers are excellent and inspiring. • Greater representation from the pulpit • Terrific ministry team. • ... ministers are approachable, they will talk to you if you talk to them.
Children RE/Children Programing	15	OWL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE seems to be doing really well, and the kids seem very happy. • Programs for children, including RE classes, OWL, Sunshine Kids, and Chalice Singers are real strengths of ERUUF and continue to be a major reason for our membership and participation in this community.
Active ERUUF membership	15	Many Opportunities to get involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of activities at ERUUF is absolutely amazing and sometimes overwhelming and that is a very good thing. There are a good number of amazing and HARD WORKING ERUUFANS who donate their TIME, ENERGY AND AMAZING TALENTS!!!! • I feel and love all the liveliness on Sunday mornings, both in the sanctuary and in the coffee hour, as well as on the weeknights when the building is humming with meetings. It all looks great to me!

Theme	Number	Subthemes	Sample comments
Spiritual/personal growth	13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of offerings for adult spiritual growth. • There is an increasing culture of spiritual growth; more acceptance of theist, mystic and pagan sources... • serving the spiritual needs of a diverse group of people
Programing Generally	10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of programs that appeal to many interests. • offering a variety of programs promoting opportunities for engagement • Lots of stuff
Most everything	10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm new, but everything seems just great to me! Please keep up the excellent work...and thank you for doing it. • All • ERUUF is doing well in every respect from my perspective! It is one of the most significant parts of my life.
Feeling of Belonging	9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel a part of this community, in terms of what I derive from it and what I can contribute. The services and activities make me think about social justice, personal and other important issues. I enjoy interacting with other attendees. This is the community that I didn't know could exist or that I was looking for. • I've been coming to ERUUF for four years, as long as I've been in Durham, and I feel a deep and genuine sense of belonging and care within this community.
Staff	7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office workers are excellent... • Office staff has the best ways to help, their caring, kind, and wonderful. • Daniel is great.
Earth Justice	7	Climate Justice, Green Campus, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am excited about the solar panels! • Progress on...ecological sustainability. • The sustainability improvements are good ones.
Campus facilities and grounds	5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grounds are gorgeous... • campus is beautiful

What Needs Work at ERUUF 2020

Summary of Comments: Of the 240 people who completed the Pulse Survey, 152 offered comments or suggestions about improvements to our services, our campus and our programming. Nine of the people who answered this question said nothing needed improvement. Many of the suggestions began with a positive comment then offered ideas for improvement. While some of the respondents were clearly unhappy with some aspect(s) of life at ERUUF, many were written in the spirit of offering positive suggestions for change. There is some overlap among the categories when a single comment appeared to fit with two ideas. For example, a comment about activities for young people was coded as “Involving Young People;” if there was also a sense of being personally left out or unable to find a niche at ERUUF, it was also coded as “Lacking a Sense of Belonging.” Responses mentioned by five or more people are included below.

Theme	Number	Sub-Themes	Sample Comments
Worship Services	21	Sermons and service themes: Overly political sermons; desire for more spiritual or UU themes in sermons; more varied spiritual perspectives; clearer and more focused sermons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has become increasingly difficult to hear sermons with a political edge. Especially in our given climate, I need a more personal message that helps me grow and evolve spiritually. Some Sunday services are a bit too fuzzy, non-focused.
Diversity	19	Overall sense we are doing better but still need improvement. General diversity: 11 Income/Education: 5 Racial: 1 Transgender/binary gender: 1 People of Color, not African: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure low-income folks feel welcome and able to participate - I think the majority of our members are well-off, and that can "accidentally" seep into the congregational culture ERUUF needs a more racially diverse congregation. That said, I know that this is a difficult and complex goal to achieve. We are doing a good job of welcoming and integrating diversity of all kinds; however, once here, all they see is a predominance of programs and preaching that focuses on racial equity. Inclusion for transgender and gender non-binary folks. We should start by making it practice to introduce ourselves in groups using our pronouns.
Music	18	Overall positive perceptions of music with some concerns: Hire Music Staff: 5 More solos, small groups, instrumental music in services: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The music program is blessed with two wonderful choir directors, basically self-running ensembles, over-loaded but high performing volunteer leaders, but it needs a point person on staff (i.e. a paid full or part time musical program director) to be responsible for the overall quality of the music

Theme	Number	Sub-Themes	Sample Comments
		Too Christian, too much call and response: 4 Concern about losing what is good in our music program: 3	program and the linkage of the music program to the spiritual mission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am worried...that there is serious talk about changing or downsizing the Eno River Singers in some way...I would feel a great loss if the role and excellence of ERS was diminished in the future. It is the main way I serve and am served.
Living in Right Relationship	18	Comments about how we interact with each other: focusing on unity, bringing back candle lighting, letting late arrivals come in and sit down, one comment about sexual harassment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a congregation, we still have a tendency to polarize quickly when a sensitive issue hits. We still haven't learned to interact with civility and respect in disagreement.
Physical Plant	17	Parking lot: 5 Kitchens & Bathrooms: 5 General cleaning & updating Sanctuary sound & lighting Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many areas of the parking lot are rutted, washed out and in disrepair. The kitchens need a good cleaning. Because of the flu season all bathrooms need soap dispensers. RE bathrooms need to have soap dispensers and sinks at their (children's) reach. Sound on left side of Chapel needs fixing: I suggest you put a sign up, warning people - sound quality is bad on the left side - and/or fix it as soon as possible
Lacking a Sense of Belonging	16	Comments often overlap with other areas; some specific sense of people feeling that they don't belong at ERUUF for a variety of reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's like this is a place for people who have a job (and) who can give to the church, but it is not about meeting people where they are or empowering them. It's also about empathy and getting a sense of the talents and strengths in the community. I don't see that going on.
Tolerance Toward Different Political Perspectives	12	Very liberal and political perspective that may not be shared by all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While I personally am a very left voter, I do feel like some people may be put off by how left the tone can be at times. Sometimes it seems that worship and sermons get too politicized. While I am in sympathy with the point of view, I don't want to hear it in services. I am a conservative Democrat, and sometimes feel like an outsider. It seems sometimes that we are becoming a bit tribal ourselves and are demonizing Republicans.
Intergenerational Activities	11	More intergenerational activities, more fun activities; bringing together young adults and older adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More inter-generational activities that bring older members together with members in their 20s and 30s. Intergenerational connections, integrating younger members and families. I've attended dinners at host's houses, meetings, but members over 50 keep to themselves and don't seem interested in getting to know me (age 35) or my family.

Theme	Number	Sub-Themes	Sample Comments
Involving Young People	9	20's-30's group support and organization; engaging young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging younger people in the leadership More attention needs to be devoted to programming that appeals to younger adults and families, which is essential for sustaining the vibrancy of our congregation in the future.
Integration of New Members	9	Challenge of finding your place as a newcomer at ERUUF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm finding it hard to get involved and make friends. It feels like there are lots of opportunities for folks of retirement age and for folks with children...it does seem like there's a gap for young adults and middle-aged adults without kids. Perhaps you could assign an established member one-on-one to new members to act as a guide to ERUUF culture and help hook up with appropriate groups and activities.
Getting to Know Each other	9	More activities for fun & fellowship; Coffee Hour – encourage more members and ministers to approach people, have more seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More fun activities, like the barn dance. Make it routine to have more chairs out during coffee hour. Some folks, like me, cannot stand still for long conversations due to leg pain.
Internal Communication & Transparency	9	Not enough communication from the Board Digital Presence: livestream services, online scheduling, website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing more from the Board in interactive conversations and activities. Many of ERUUF's problems come from a lack of clarity around roles, responsibility and decision-making authority, and a good deal of energy is wasted by the effort that it takes to get things done.
Staff & Ministerial Support	8	Load on our ministers and staff; need for better coordination of staff across programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase staff to reduce the burden on existing staff. The load on the senior minister, at this point in time, is not sustainable. The staff doesn't always seem to be working together as a team. For example, RE seems to operate completely independently of Music, even though there is overlap.
Social Justice & Community Involvement	7	Need for more engagement with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with the broader community on the issues that reflect our values Reaching out to people of lower socio-economic status- we are a fairly homogeneous group in terms of income- yet our campus is across from a low-income housing complex. We could also do more in terms of housing insecurity in Durham- one of the biggest social issues in our city.
Antiracism/ Multicultural Efforts	7	Need to continue our multicultural efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving a voice to POC so that we all benefit from their perspective and they are empowered and can become true leaders. I wonder how we can develop more effectively Beloved Community, possibly with the messages of non-judgment, unconditional love and acceptance of self and others as the roots of change? ERUUF's members continue to demonstrate much

Theme	Number	Sub-Themes	Sample Comments
			<p>resistance to acknowledging our role in perpetuating separateness and our roles in perpetuating the living legacy of White Supremacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like to see greater emphasis on our unity/oneness to balance our celebration of diversity,
Children & Youth RE	6	Varied comments; some noted a need for better teacher recruitment, some noted a problem with organization and a need for more RE staff. There were two comments about having more resources for youth and for recent high school grads who are still involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, I just don't have the sense that there is much basic organization within the RE office. • I'm a youth, so speaking from the youth perspective, more resources to RE and having a full-time youth minister, make spiritual development more accessible for all youth ages, and do not make coming of age only for 9th graders. • We need to build our RE teaching teams to allow for sharing of the work from year to year.
Spiritual Development	6	More spiritual practice and development in the services, in small groups and in RE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though progress has been made in the last year towards developing opportunities and groups for spiritual development, I think this remains an area where we are far from living into our potential as a religious community. • Spiritual practice during services. It's NOT entertainment. It's a religious service.
Volunteers	6	Finding and encouraging new volunteers, including young people, continuing with leadership development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a small cadre of volunteers, i.e. the same few people do everything. There needs to be more and more effective focus on volunteer engagement as well as leadership development.
Ministers	5	Need for minister to actively reach out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers need to walk up to people and talk to everyone.