

2018 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

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Overview of Pulse Survey

What is the Pulse? Over the past 10 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 2018, there were specific questions focused on Earth Justice. A total of 227 individuals responded to the survey in 2018.

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. In 2018, the Earth Justice team received the raw results from the specific questions to use in their Green Sanctuary efforts.

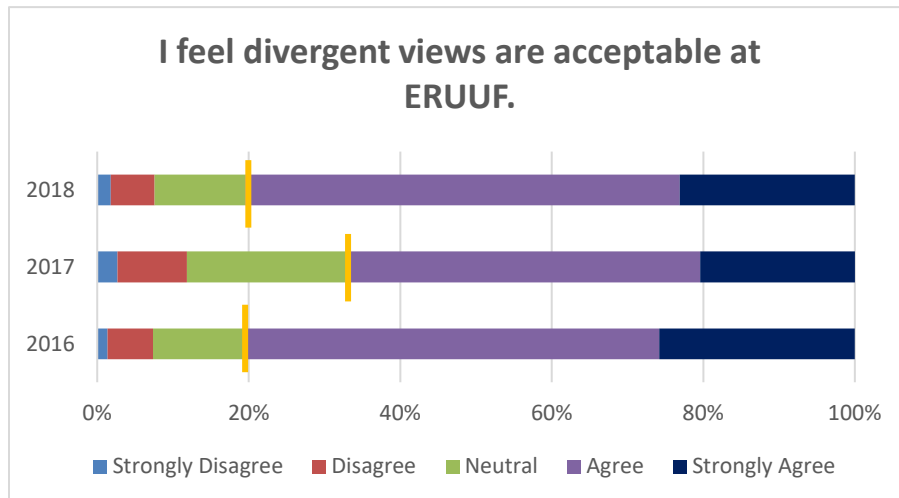
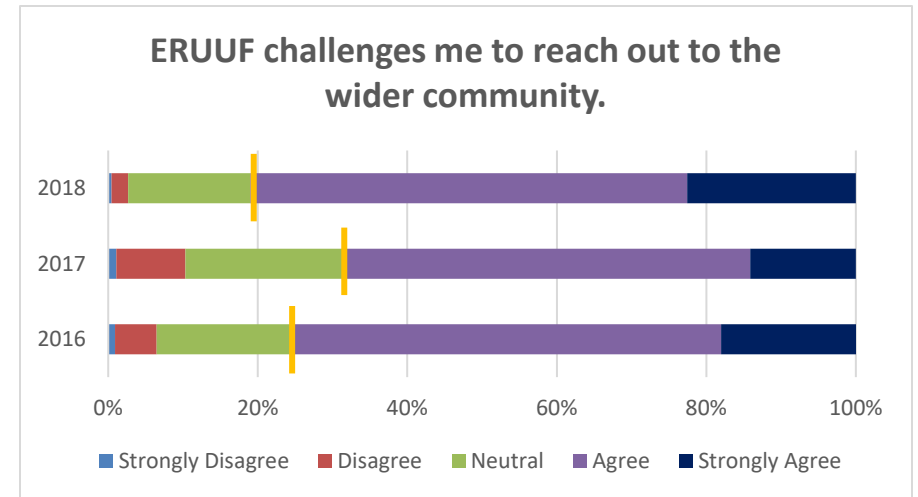
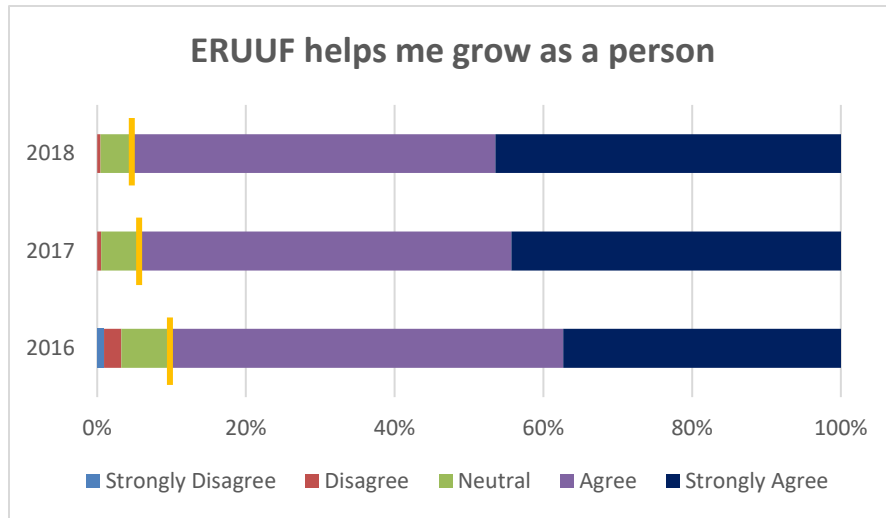
An important note about individual comments: The Committee on Evaluation of Ministry (CEM) reads every single comment and codes them to identify themes mentioned by multiple individuals. These themes are then shared with the staff, along with sample comments to illustrate the theme. It is not necessarily 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 2018 results show? As you will see in the detailed charts and comment tables, the overall conclusion is that ERUUF is going in the right direction, with continued opportunities for growth. Key findings include:

- Overall, there were improved perceptions of the quality of worship, the music, and the ministry team.

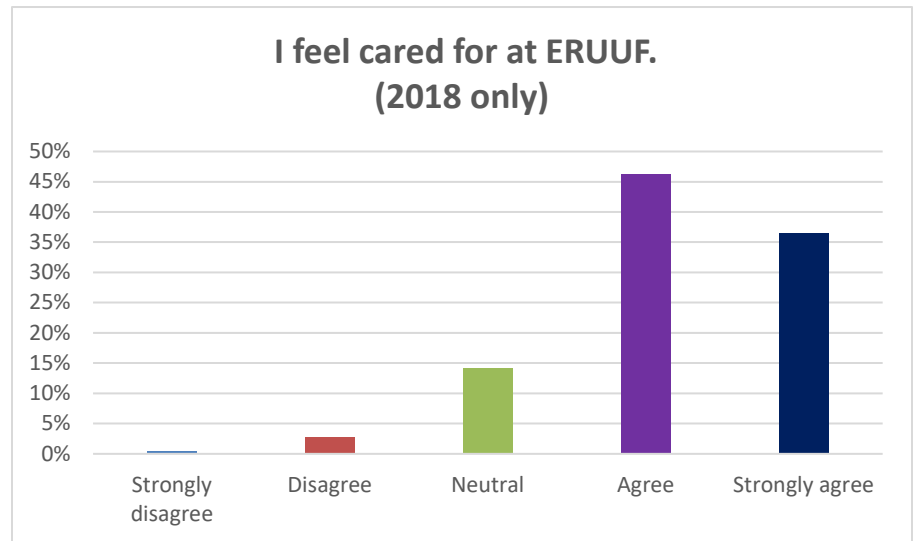
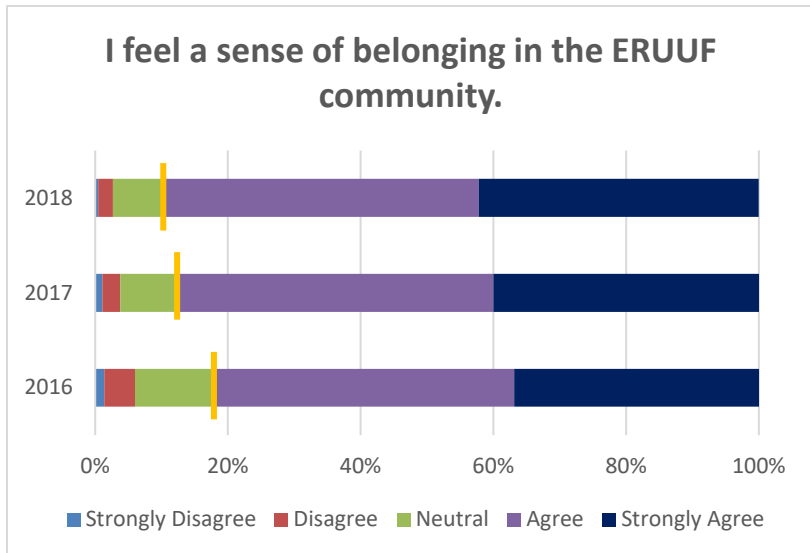
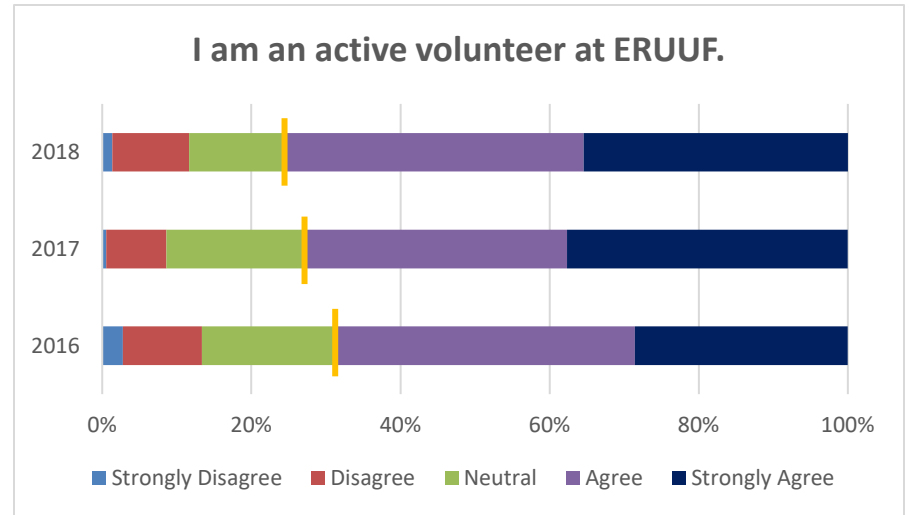
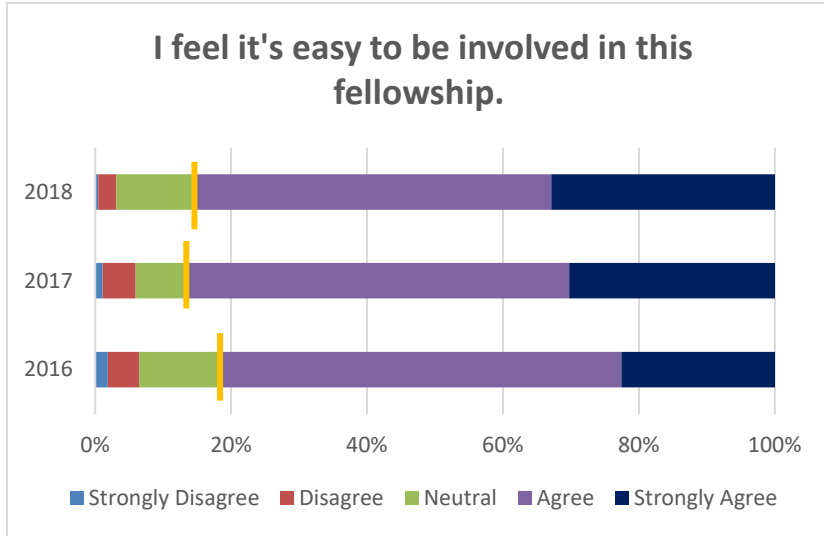
- Many people saw tremendous value in the anti-racism work but also believed there was more to do.
- There were improved perceptions of pastoral care and integration of new members, both areas of emphasis in the past year.
- There was an improvement in perceptions of stewardship and financial support (likely related to the Special Campaign).
- Among some respondents, there was continued tension between congregational emphases on social justice and spiritual development. Respondents also had differing views on what they wanted out of Sunday morning worship services.
- Additional key suggestions for improvement included: focusing social justice work; improving both internal and external communications (including the website); providing social activities for fellowship; and expanding opportunities for spiritual development.
- One cross-cutting theme was the desire for increased involvement by young people.

Personal Growth at ERUUF

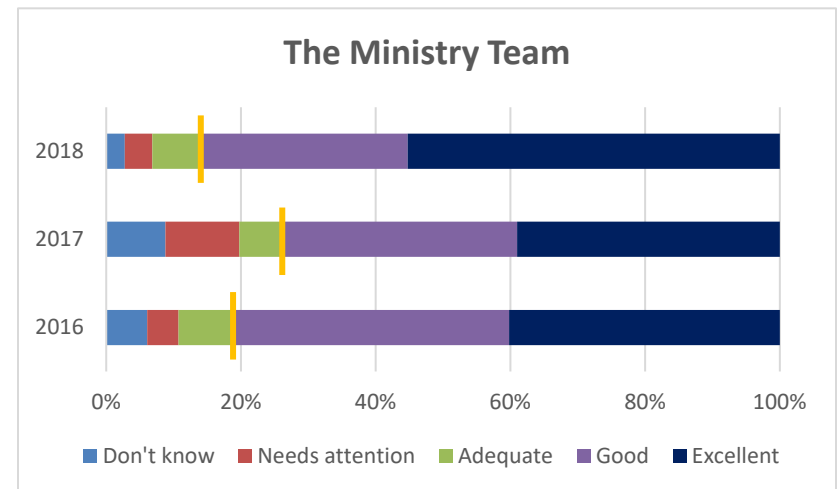
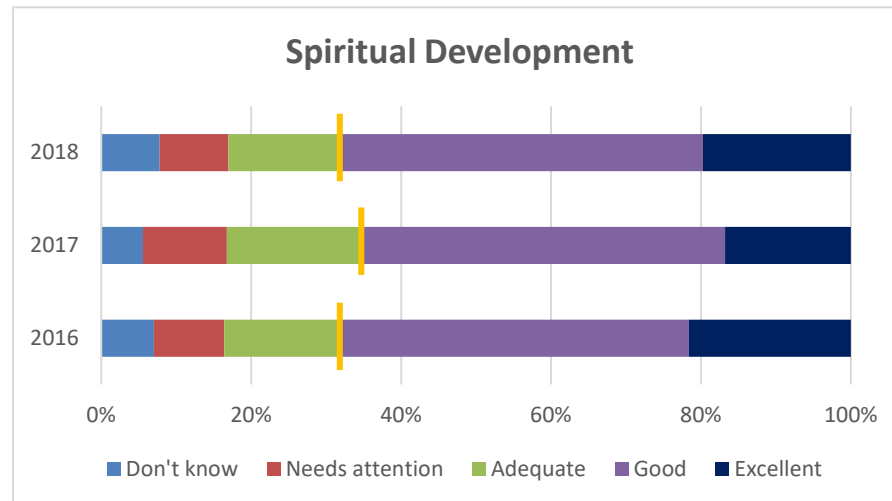
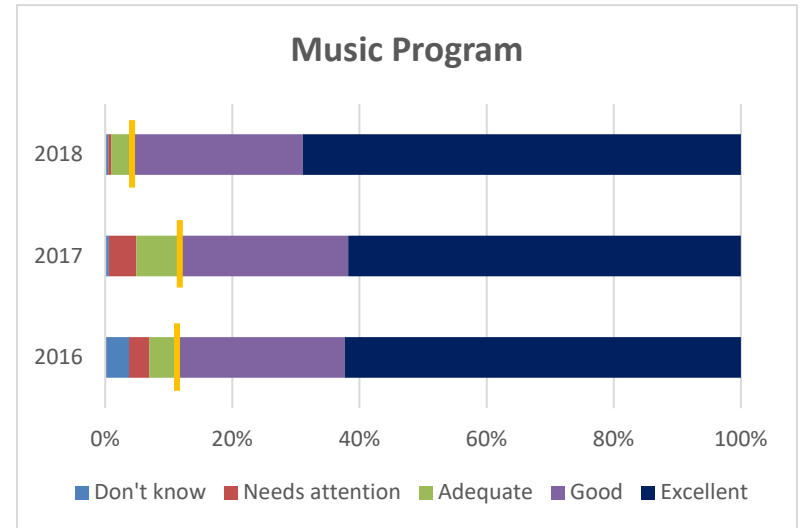
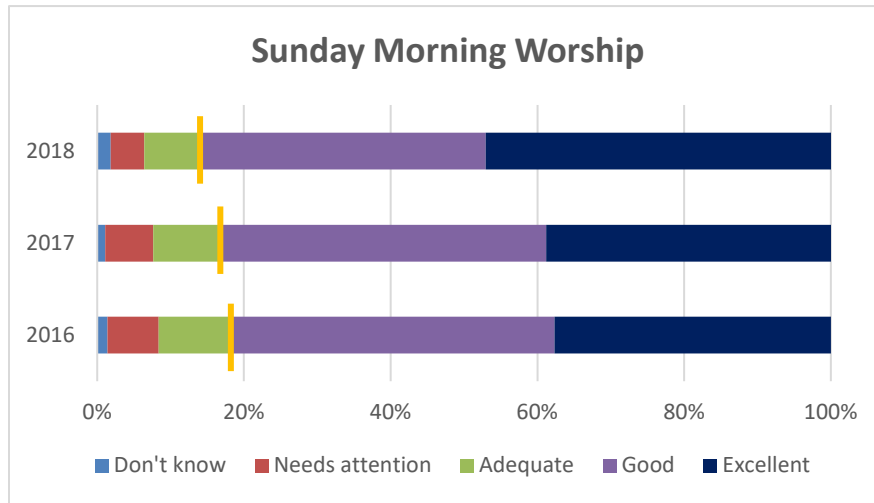


Last year, we saw a substantial decline in the percentage of people who believed that divergent views were acceptable at ERUUF. In 2018, this rebounded to pre-election levels.

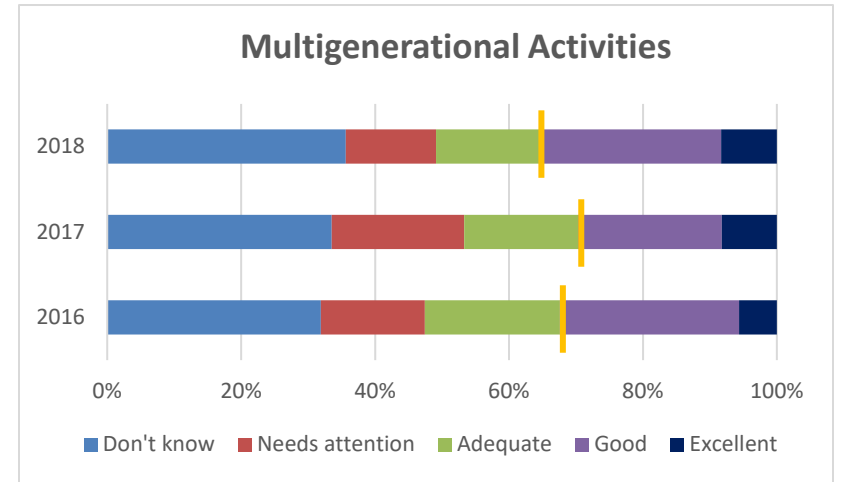
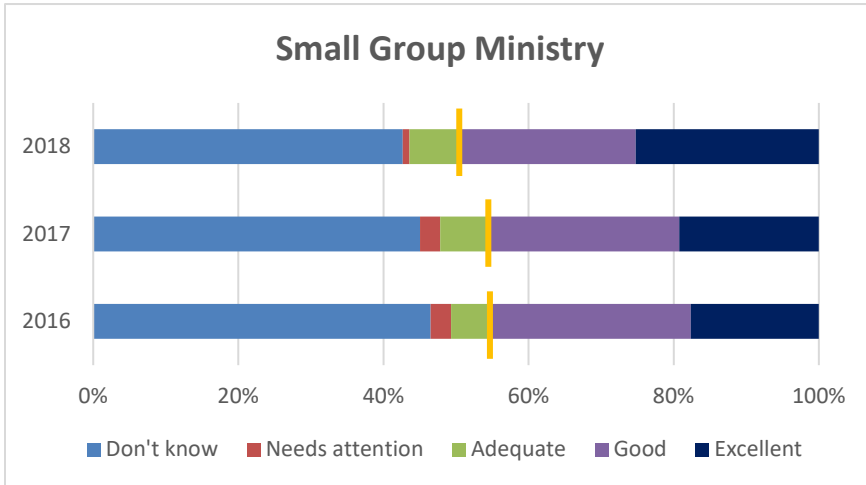
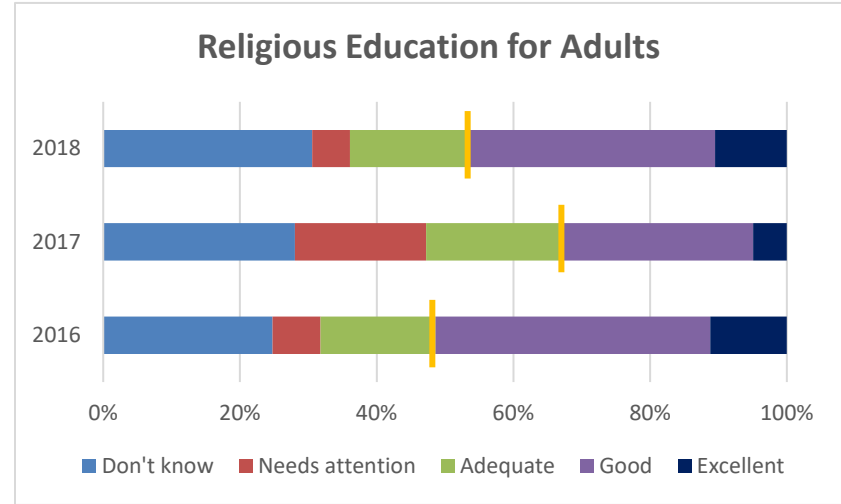
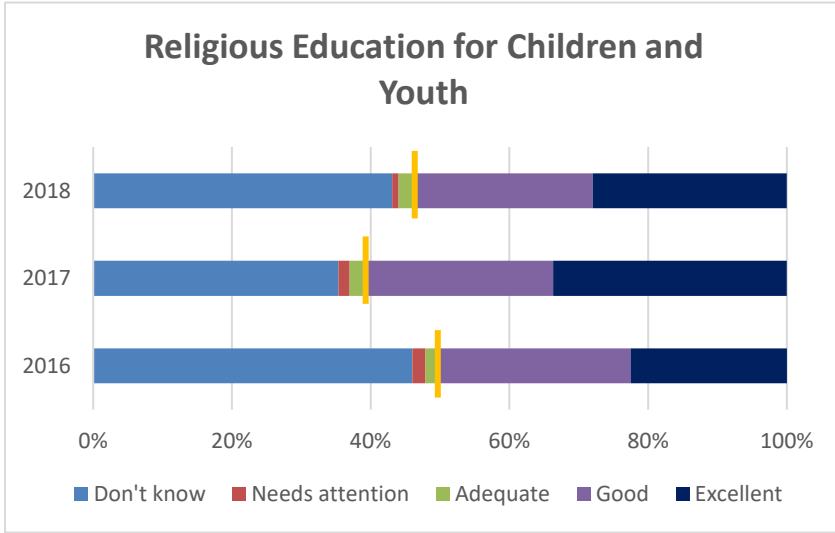
Involvement and Caring at ERUUF



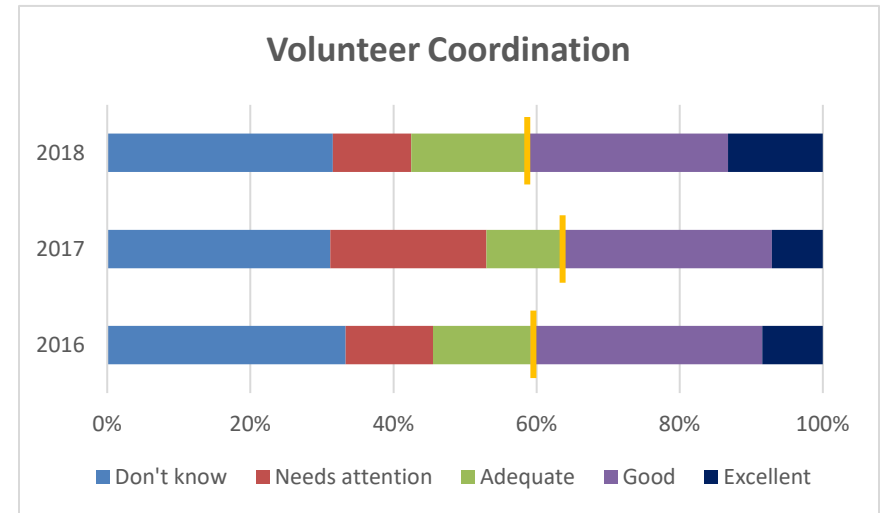
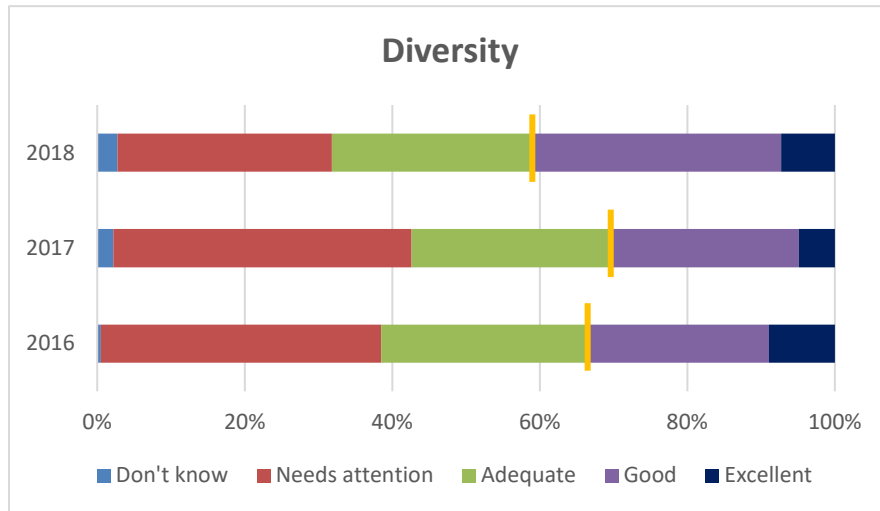
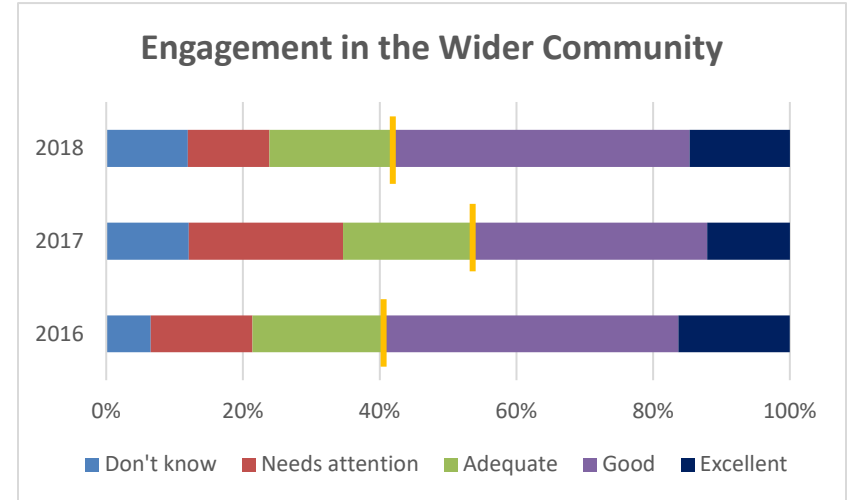
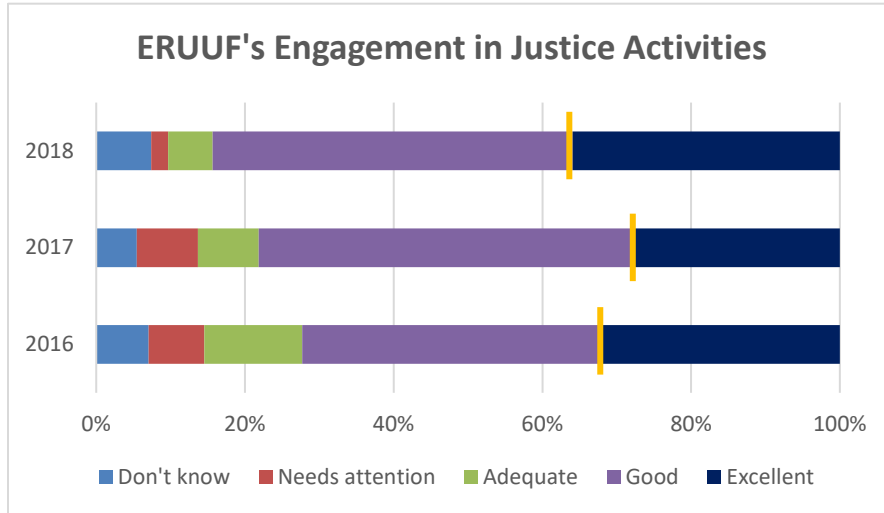
Sunday Morning and Spiritual Development



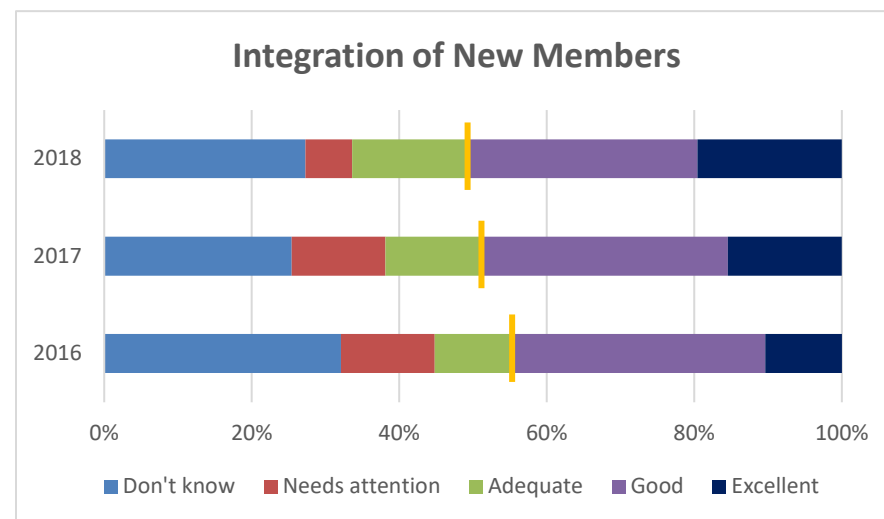
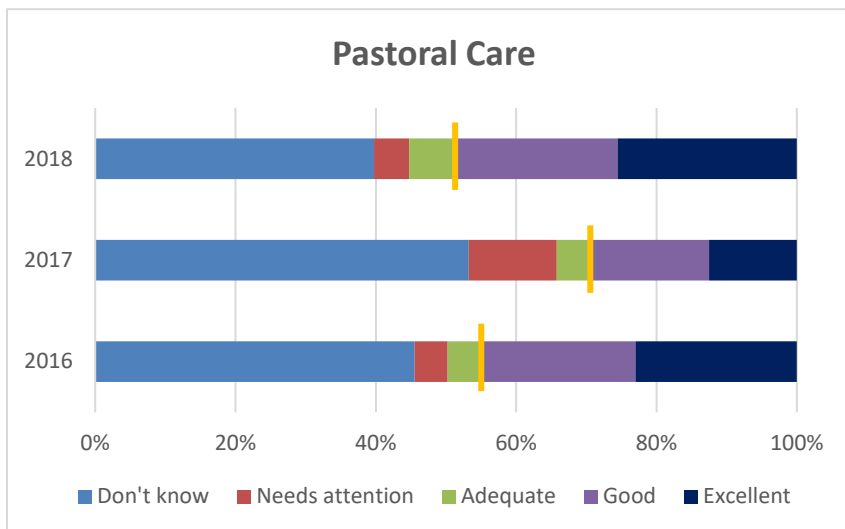
Religious Education for Youth and Adults



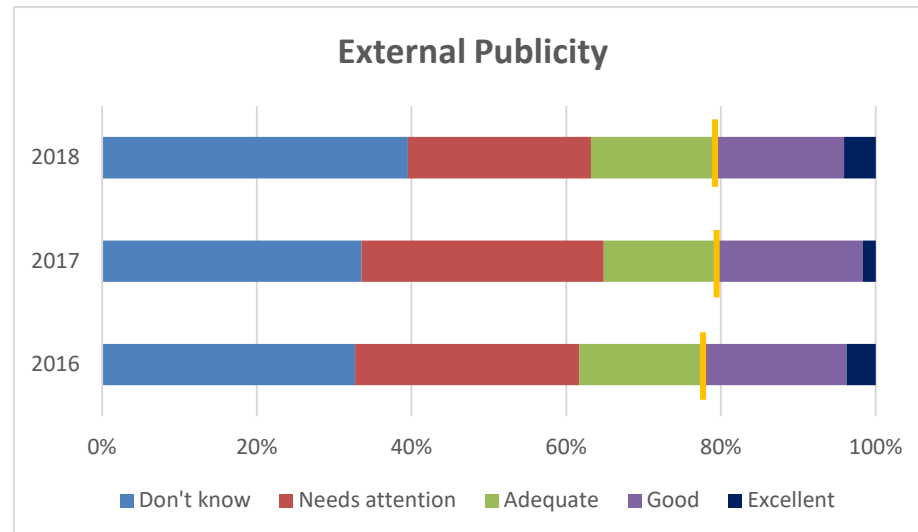
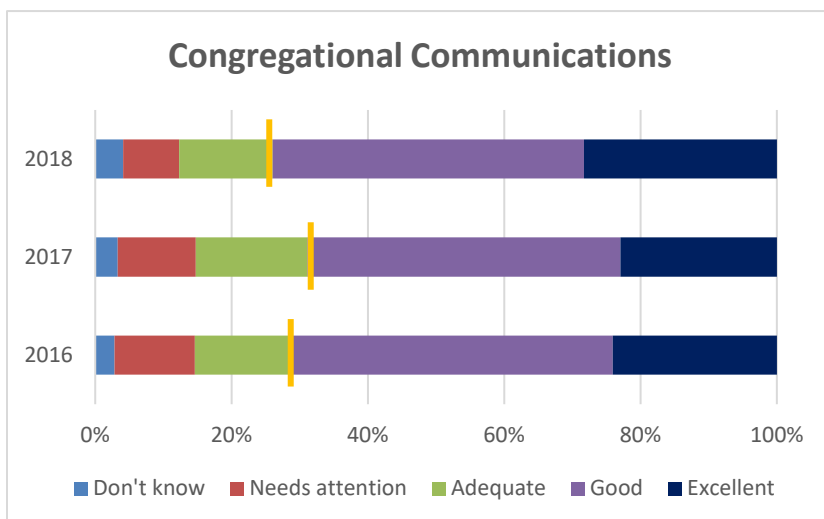
Social Justice and Volunteer Involvement



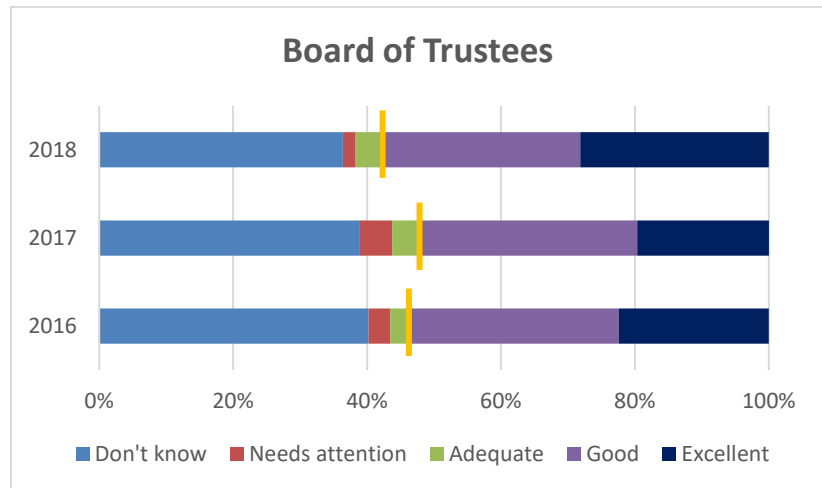
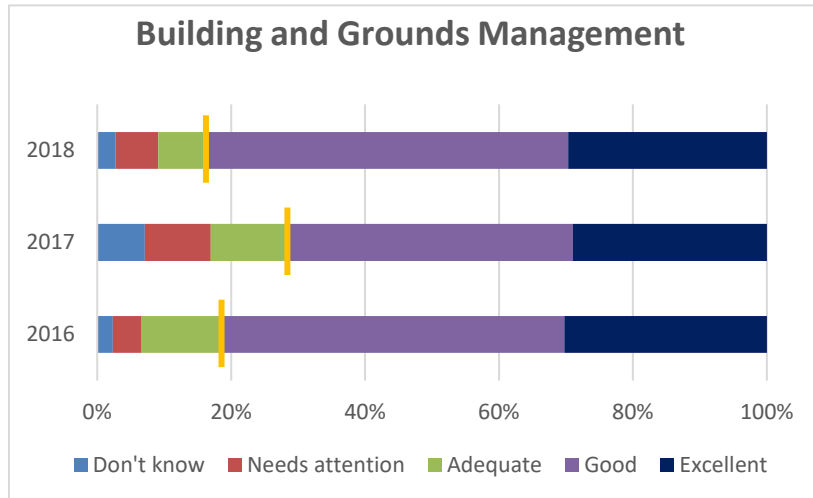
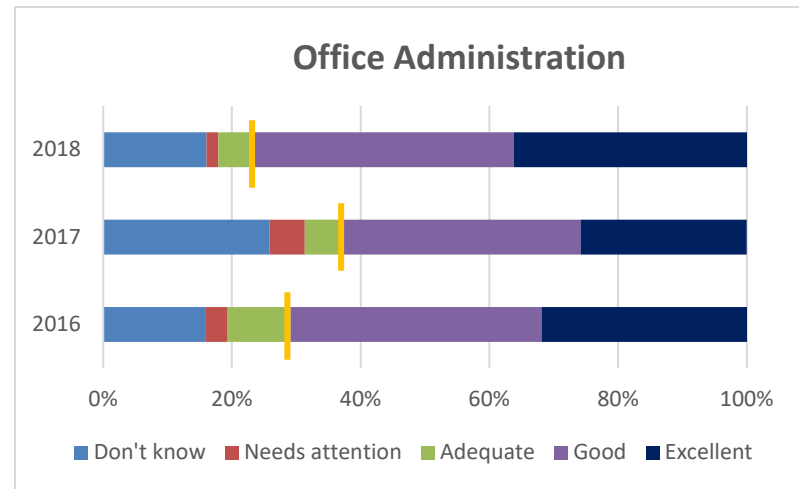
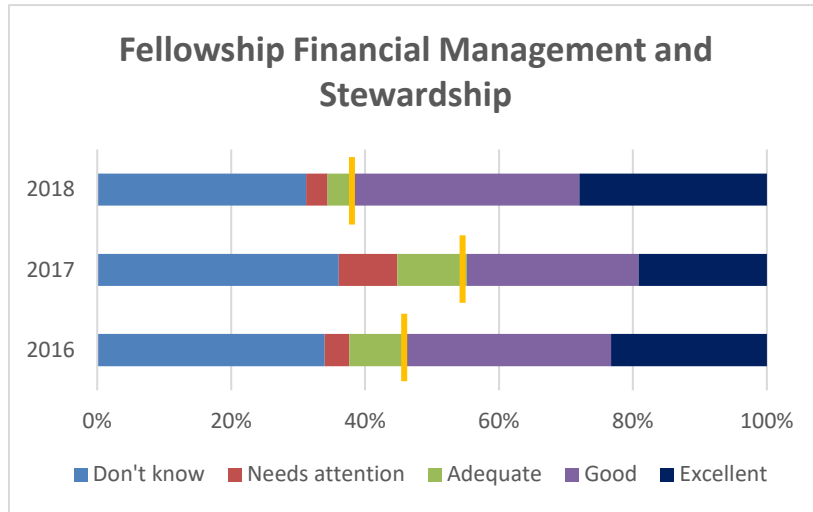
Caring and Integration

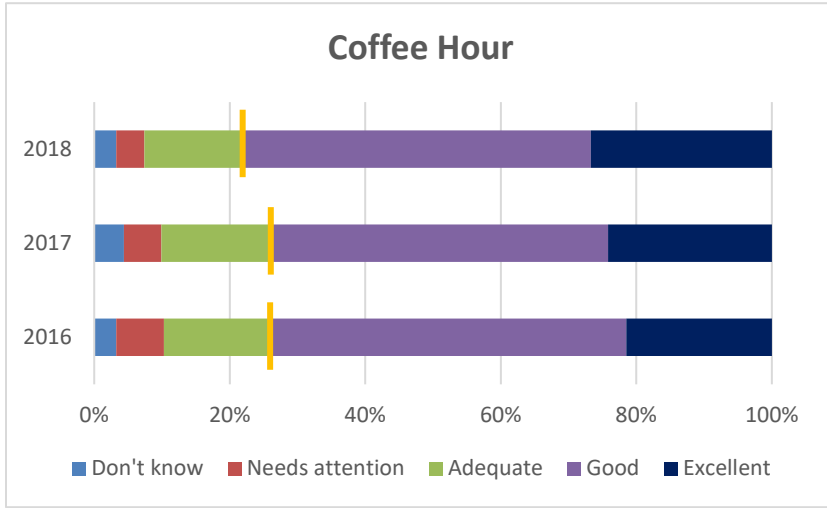


Communications

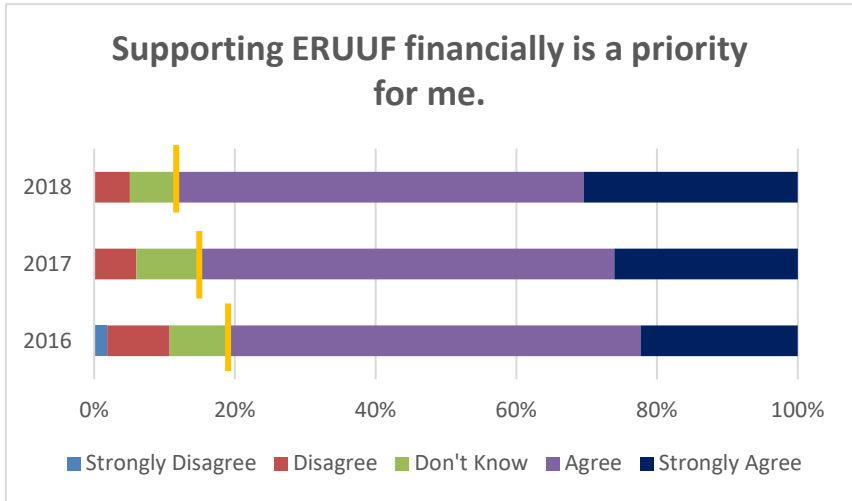
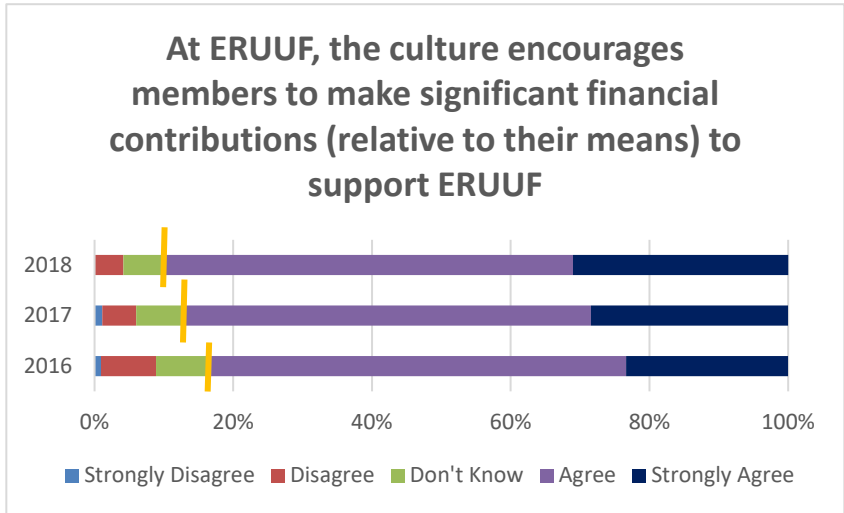
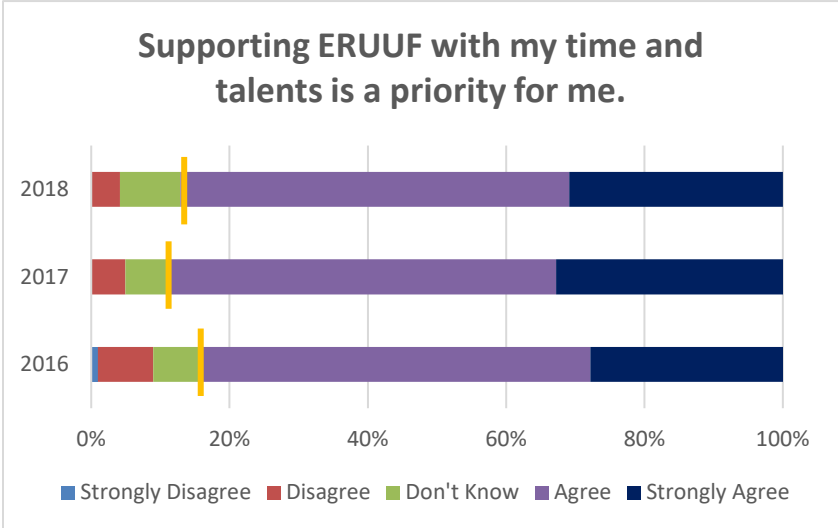
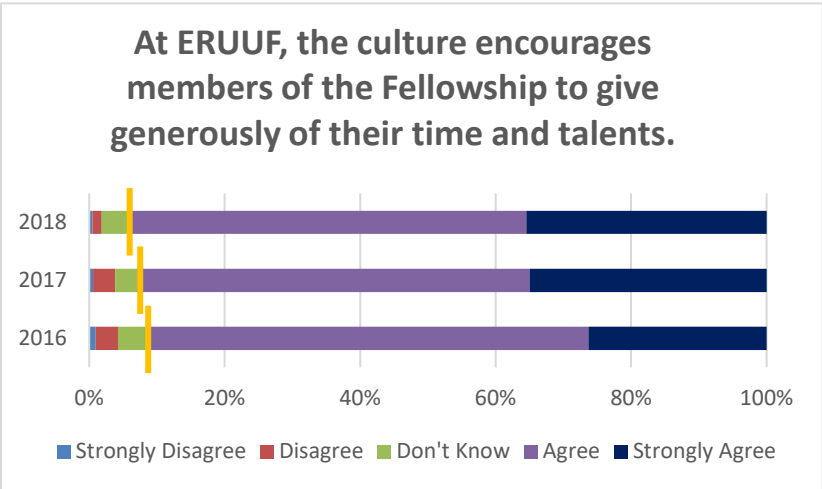


Management, Administration and Stewardship

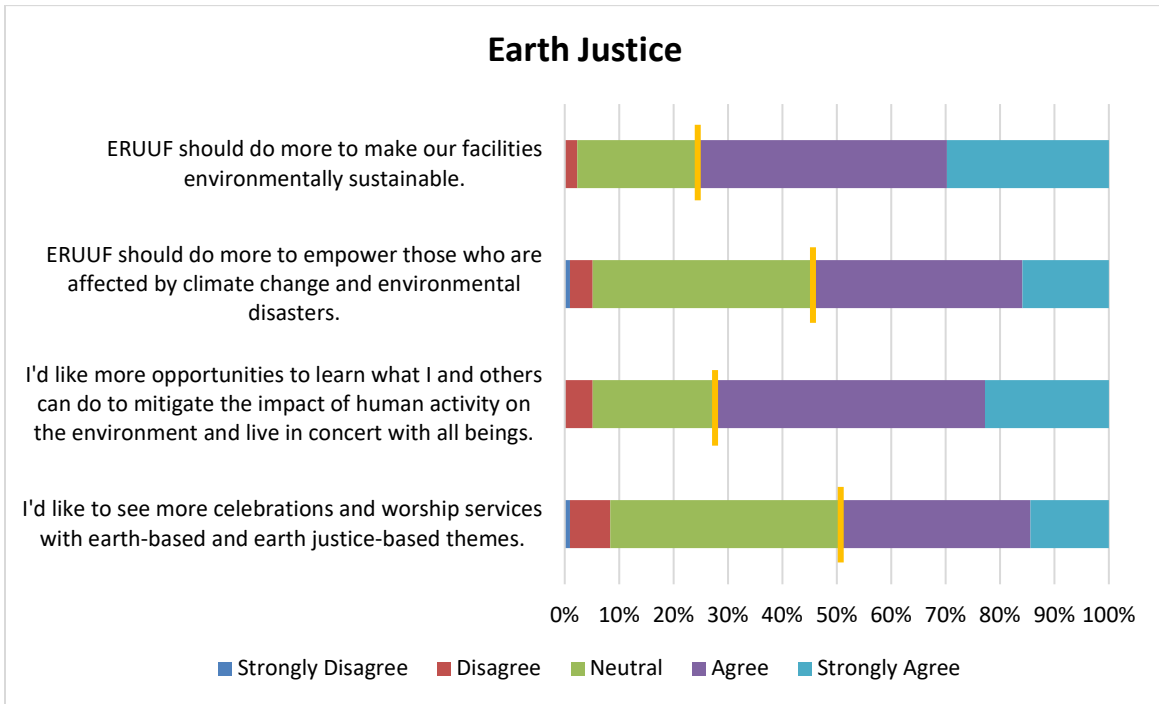




Commitment to ERUUF



Special Earth Justice Supplement



Who answered the survey in 2018?

A total of 227 respondents

Membership status: 86% were members, 13% were not; 1% did not know.

Length of involvement:

- 37% had been involved more than 15 years
- 21% had been involved for 6-15 years
- 20% 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:

- We had no respondents under 21.
- 11% were between 22 and 40
- 49% were between 41 and 65
- 38% were between 66 and 80
- 3% were over 80

Approximately 70% lived closer than 9 miles but 10% travelled more than 15 miles.

What is ERUUF Doing Well?

Of the 227 people who returned the survey, 162 replied to the open-ended question, “What is ERUUF doing well?” Mentioned most often (over 40 times) were worship, the warm, welcoming community, and the music program. Twenty or more people mentioned anti-racism / multicultural work, ministers, social justice / community involvement, and RE. The table below supplies more detail.

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
Worship	42	Consistent message; varied services; challenging and meaningful services; energy level; multi-cultural awareness; well-planned; sermons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Services are improving and creating a coherent message.” • “Services are varied, interesting, and thought-provoking.” • “The energetic and celebratory nature of our worship services...” • “ERUUF is doing a good job of intentionally creating worship that speaks to different cultural experiences in the US...” • “... a good mix of sermons focusing on spiritual development, justice issues, and calls to action.”
Warm / community/ fellowship / welcoming	42	inclusivity, health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have a rich community that gets richer with each person's involvement.” • “...true acceptance, sincere compassion, mutual support, creating a healthy community life for members.” • “kind and inclusive culture” • “ERUUF does a good job at welcoming members of the LGBTQ community and being open to different points of view.”
Music	41	diverse music, Beloved Community chorus, pianist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have a dynamic, diverse music program.” • “The Beloved Community Chorus has been a wonderful addition to our music program. It gets people engaged and is so spirited instead of just being a performance.” • “Kate is an amazing pianist.”

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
Anti-Racism / Multi-cultural work	27	Noticeable change, careful work, opportunities for people of color, education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Multi culture awareness is making a mark, as well the visibility of the problems of people of color.” • “Racial Equity and Inclusion initiatives, the manner in which we are paying attention to our entire systems and structures as we do that particular work.” • “Creating programs and outlets of black people of color.” • “Offering Dismantling Racism workshops, Becoming the Change, and other opportunities to prepare us for the work of addressing systemic white supremacy in our culture.”
Ministers	25	Recognizing individual strengths and team work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We have a senior minister who is very strong on the caring/empathy/help people feel good axis. We have an excellent assistant minister attending to membership and social justice.” • “Jacqueline Brett's energy and enthusiasm and thoughtful challenging sermons.” • “Our family loves the worship team and feel a great synergy between Deb and Jacqueline.” • “Attendees at Sunday morning services seem more diverse this year than in the past, and I think that's great. I believe our clergy deserve a lot of credit for this.”
Social Justice / Community Involvement	23	working with other organizations, pride in ERUUF's activities, racial justice, earth justice, gender awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “... working with the larger community via CAN, Urban Ministry...” • “I'm proud that ERUUF's social justice work is known throughout the wider community.” • “The emphasis on earth justice is increasing appropriately.” • “I appreciate the focus on racial equity and justice at ERUUF and commitment to serving and lifting up the needs of all people including gender variant, trans and non-binary folks.”

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
RE for Children and Youth	20	diverse staff, OWL, middle school youth group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There seems to be a lot of energy with families of young children and from a distance the RE program seems to be in good hands.” • “Well organized RE program.” • “The newer, more diverse staff hires in RE are important and valued.” • “RE and OWL are invaluable resources.” • “... middle school youth group is wonderful.”
Ways to be involved/ engaged/ grow	16	Variety of ways to engage inside and outside the ERUUF community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Member engagement has really improved...” • “Bringing folks into activism for justice is going well.” • “There is so much going on at ERUUF, and plenty of opportunities to make a difference for people in the community.” • “Plenty of opportunities for engagement in small and large groups.” • “Offering many opportunities to engage through music, writing, visual arts.”
Most everything	14		“Overall, I feel like things are going great at ERUUF. We just need to keep on keeping on!”
Physical Space	13	grounds, signage and maps on campus, sign out front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The grounds look great.” • “There have been some small but important improvements around campus — like maps and signage.” • “The new sign is welcoming and affirming.”
Diversity	13	Ethnic diversity; age diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our membership looks and feels more diverse than it has in the past, though of course there is always more to be done there.” • “The newer, more diverse staff hires in RE are important and valued.”
Small group ministry	12		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Having chalice circles and covenant groups.” • “Small groups with emphasis on listening.”

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
Pastoral Care	12	noticeable improvement; Stacy is appreciated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...pastoral care is good and more involved..." • "Stacy is a great asset and presence."
Integrating new members/ expansion	10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We seem to be doing a very good job of attracting new people, young people especially." • "Helping new members get involved."
Supporting each other	10	spiritual support; caring for each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Spiritual support for members in need." • "There is a strong sense of supportive, healthy community here I've not seen in many other congregations."
Finances / Stewardship	10	Finances well managed; fund raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We're doing a good job of looking into the future in terms of our vision and our financial situation." • "... financial planning, increased focus on building maintenance." • "The finances appear to be well managed."
Staff	8		"Staff, ministers, members are kind and inviting and helpful in times of need."
Adult RE	7	variety, improved and increased offerings; daytime offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I think the classes offered in history, and other areas has improved." • "Appreciation for the newish "Wednesday Matinee" session about aging, death and dying and minister lead." • "increase in minister led classes, vespers, etc. "
Different Activities	7	Many activities, variety of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There's something for everyone at ERUUF. Some group, some class, some music, some people." • "ERUUF has a lot going on for lots of different interests and ages."
UU Values	6	Being clear about what UU values are; committed to the UU principles; putting faith into action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "... making it clear about where ERUUF stands on principles" • "Our congregation is committed to the UU principles." • "In Sunday services, calling us to put our faith into action."

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
Governance	5	Institutional awareness; broad, systematic approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There seems to be concerted efforts at systemic/institutional levels to address fundamental organizational and communications challenges to better pursue the mission to enhance community,” • “Working on formalizing structures to reflect larger size of congregation.”
Communication	5	communication beyond ERUUF; internal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...our messaging to the outside world via our sign is just what is needed right now.” • “good communication with the enews, bulletin and Currents”

What Needs Work at ERUUF

Out of 227 respondents, 159 answered the question about what needs work at ERUUF. Many of the comments indicated that the areas specified were doing well or better than in the past but still needed attention (for example, respondents noted the greater emphasis on diversity, but indicated that we need to continue to work on this). The largest area of concern was around worship services with some respondents wishing for quieter, more spiritually oriented services and others wishing for a new format for services. Other areas of concern included a desire for more organized and focused Social Justice work (including in the realm of Earth Justice), better integration of newcomers and more effective outreach to the community. While the improving the website could be included as a sub-theme in communication, it seemed important enough to be its own theme. Please note that there may be some overlap among themes; that is, the same comment may be referenced in Worship Services and in Spiritual Development.

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
Worship Services	30	<p>Sermons: some seen as being too political rather than spiritual in nature; some see as not being coherent.</p> <p>Style of service: Some wanted more complete services; others wanted livelier services or a wider variety of types of service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Too many of the sermons have too much of a political slant and not enough of a higher message about the need for a positive, steadfast look at our individual and collective spiritual beliefs. Sunday sermons often feel too much like a us versus them message - which is not true to UU values.” • “Some sermons could be more coherent, formed on a single point.” • “The services seem to have become more cluttered and theatrical, with a focus on celebration, something akin to the way that leaders at a protest try to create a heightened group emotion. This is not what I come to Sunday services for. I prefer sparser, contemplative, thought-provoking services with enough space to absorb and begin to consider the content.” • “A greater range of Sunday services that are structured more diversely, moving away from the traditional Judeo-Christian Sunday service.”

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
Social Justice Work	20	<p>Improve focus and organization of social justice efforts</p> <p>More community oriented programs, focusing on racial equity (emphasis African American & Latino) and refugee work</p> <p>Environmental action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We need more focused opportunities for engagement in social justice work--not just talk/workshops/marches/ phone banking/get out the vote, but identifying one or two focused projects where many ERUFIANS can get involved--go deep and do it well” • “More involvement among congregants in Justice work, finding ways to increase the ability and motivation of those who recognize its foundational aspects of Unitarian Universalism as clearly present in the Seven Principles.” • “Stronger long-term leadership in justice areas (especially earth justice)” • “Hosting music concerts with singer/songwriters with social justice themes”
Marketing & Outreach	20	<p>Promoting events and UU values to the larger community</p> <p>Drawing in more participation from the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Provide assistance to people in the community on our campus (e.g., hold memorials here when there is grief in the community). Spreading understanding in the community of what UU's believe in and work toward.” • “Being the voice for progressive spiritual values in Durham community” • “Advertising to the greater community in order to attract a more diverse population, we need to put ourselves out there more and create more services that are meant to attract a greater external audience.”
Diversity	19	<p>Inclusion and outreach to diverse groups: specific mention of different racial, ethnic, gender and age groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Power inequality (both from entrenched interests such as white supremacy as well as financial and cultural prejudices towards the rich and existing power structures) is at the root of our many conflicts in this world and I think a focus on humility, accompaniment and inspiring radical art will inspire a more inclusive community more than a focus on the naming and shaming of white supremacy.” • “Diversity at ERUUF has improved but can be much better. I feel that not all people

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
			<p>of color (POC) are comfortable about identifying themselves and getting involved. This indicates that we are doing something wrong.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Incorporating elements from non-white and non-black cultures into programs and worship.” • “While ERUUF does great work acknowledging some marginalized groups, they'd benefit greatly with younger folks if they moved beyond the gender binary. Many services we hear man and woman acknowledged without acknowledging folks that are agender, transgender, bigender, gender queer, nonbinary etc.” • “Where are the young people at ERUUF?”
Promoting fellowship among members and friends	16	Activities for fun and fellowship: Providing opportunities for different types of people to interact socially with each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “More music, more all-fellowship dinners, more concerts, more excuses to get together.” • “Some community potluck picnics would be great when the weather is nice. We could set up tables along the outside corridor and in the Fellowship hall and open all the doors.” • “A congregation-wide retreat that celebrates multi-age and multicultural activities.” • “If you were a Republican you would feel unwelcome at ERUUF. There are many shared values that transcend the conservative/liberal frame that align with ERUUF principles and values. I would like to see ERUUF work to bring all types of people together.” • “Reviving the 20s and 30s group and Interweave would be nice.”
Integration of new members	16	<p>Welcoming Newcomers</p> <p>Following up initial welcome with ongoing contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It has taken me a long time (approximately 6-8 years) to feel welcome and accepted as part of the ERUUF community even though I've volunteered since I started at ERUUF. I wish there was a quicker way for adults to feel part of the community and connect with other likeminded folks. “

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “New members need to be followed up on and integrated into the community. Initial greeting is warm but then you tend to get lost.” • “If opportunities for newcomers to learn more about ERUUF included children’s programming, we would be more able to attend.”
Internal Communication & Transparency	13	<p>Better internal communication between board and congregation and between staff and congregation</p> <p>Transparency regarding policy, staff changes and other matters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Communications, especially regarding the why and how of things, can be improved” • “Greater clarity re: the many, many groups active at ERUUF -- how to join, what’s going on. Constant reminders are needed to tap into online news.” • “Provide a clearer understanding of how things work and how to get them done. There are people who have all the answers, but they aren’t documented.” • “Inform and involve the congregation in major policy and budget decisions.”
Website & Digital Presence (sub-theme of communication)	9	<p>Improve the website</p> <p>Increase digital communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “THE WEBSITE. Seriously. Please fix it.” • “The web site needs to be a task force project. Seems the IT contractor is holding the ERUUF website hostage, as only they can make changes.” • “Would like more access to services and classes for home bound and traveling members (streaming).” • “More planful communication via social media; the increased use of Facebook has been good should become part of the regular communication from the office”
Staff & Ministerial Support	14	<p>More full-time ministers, especially more time for Pastoral Care minister</p> <p>More staff to support ministers and congregation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Office and ministerial staff both need to double to properly serve a congregation of this size.” • “A paid volunteer coordinator is desperately needed to mine the talents of the members”
Spiritual Development	12	UU principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “More attention and intention on living our UU Principles collectively as a spiritual

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
		Spiritual Deepening Spiritual Diversity	<p>community. More encouragement and support to live them individually and out in the world."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "If someone wants to deepen their spiritual life and practice, what is being offered to help them? Besides the Buddhist meditation group, I can't think of anything else that supports that kind of deepening spirituality. That seems like a big gap if our goal is to transform lives." • "ERUUF needs to do a better job of teaching/incorporating spiritual practices. In my view, recent emphases on political liberalism and multiculturalism has come at the expense of developing spirituality within the membership." • "More diversity of theological perspective from the pulpit."
Physical Plant	11	More Space for events, especially in Fellowship Hall Grounds, Driveways & Parking lots Better cleaning in kitchens and bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Larger fellowship hall or more seating during big events such as soup supper. There are often no seats; I find my family rushing to eat to allow someone else to sit or we are standing while others enjoy their meal." • "Handicap accessibility. Reaching the sanctuary from the handicapped parking on the right side is really difficult. " • "Lighting at night in parking lot" • "Consider paving the back parking lot because it can be difficult to navigate during snow or rain." • "Augment the great new signage: although ERUUF is a smoke-free campus, small signs are posted only on buildings; thus visitors might drive in smoking, or smoke in the parking lot."
Adult RE	11	More Adult RE opportunities: suggestions include lecture series, more daytime classes, Adult OWL and offering childcare or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Adult programs seem sub-par for a congregation our size, both in terms of the number of offerings and the quality. Wednesday Connections' latest "every week" approach doesn't seem to be working." • "We need more adult education programs on all topics of various related and

Theme	Number of Comments	Sub-themes	Sample Comments
		programming during adult events	<p>harmonious faith paths. One idea is to have fund raisers for a "Speakers Bureau" or similar programming. RE doesn't stop with high schoolers."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Adult OWL would be great!"
Children & Youth RE	8	RE classes (comments regarding organization & planning, teacher recruitment & preparation, curriculum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My child does not enjoy the RE program and that is the main reason for our lack of attendance." • "RE curriculum at K and 1st grade could be updated. Great ideas, but sometimes hard for kids to connect to stories." • "Teacher recruitment. Clearly delineate who is the lead and who is in a support role for each class." • "The changes to Coming of Age (focusing only on younger students) was done without any input from parents or youth."
Stewardship	7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Members and friends need to increase their pledges so that we have the budget we need for a congregation our size." • "Getting a better understanding among longer term members about stewardship; including stewardship in all program areas at ERUUF."
Volunteers	6	<p>Leadership Development</p> <p>Appeal to a larger group of volunteers, including younger people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "ERUUF still struggles with how best to grow and support lay volunteers and leaders, resulting in the same core of people running most of the programs on campus. Volunteerism and leadership development need attention." • "Getting younger members to help out in programs that the older members do"
Pastoral care	6	More ministerial time and focus for Pastoral Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Full time pastoral care minister.....three full time ministers" • "Transportation network for elders who relocate to CCR communities and are not driving." • "Help your members who are looking for work to achieve their goals. It is hard to help ERUUF when I do not have a job and am slowly going broke."