



MULTIPLY-AFFILIATED CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A Research Report of the United Church of Christ
Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD)

June 2015

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**





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INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Ecumenism in modern and post-modern Western Protestantism possesses a deep and rich history, and there is no better example of this desire for Christian unity than the United Church of Christ. Founded in 1957 as the result of the merger between the Congregational Christian Church and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, both of which were mergers themselves, the UCC truly embodies the words on its insignia “that they may all be one.”¹ As a denomination, we publicly state that we are called to be a united and uniting church: “In essentials–unity, in non-essentials–diversity, in all things–charity.”²

Nearly 9% of all churches are affiliated with another denomination in addition to the UCC.

This diversity is reflected in one particularly unique way among UCC congregations—namely, that nearly 9% of all churches (455 churches in total) are affiliated with another denomination(s) in addition to the UCC. Terminology describing these congregations is equally diverse. They can be known as partnering, multiply-affiliated, cooperating, dually-affiliated, joined / joining, twin, etc. For the purposes of uniformity, the Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) refers to these congregations as multiply-affiliated or ecumenical; and in the UCC, there are three major designations by which these types of churches have been categorized historically:

1. **Dual congregations**, which possess dual alignment or affiliation with one or more denominations. These congregations generally maintain one single membership list and one unified organizational structure and budget.
2. **Federated congregations**, which are a single congregation composed of two or more autonomous or semi-autonomous bodies, maintaining separate membership lists. A federated church may or may not have separate organizational structures and budgets for each affiliating denomination. Federated congregations began to be organized in the late 1800’s.
3. **Union congregations**, which are specifically defined by an historic agreement in which churches of Lutheran and Reformed (now UCC) background share the same building. Some historically Union congregations have also adopted federated or dual form, so that makes categorization difficult. And in some communities, as many as four congregations use the same facilities according to some formal schedule. The earliest known Union congregation was founded around 1710.³

In addition, a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly frequent involves UCC congregations affiliating with traditions or groups that do not necessarily hold mainline denominational status but may have some broader recognition. For example, the Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, a multi-denominational group of primarily African American Christian leaders and laity representing churches and faith-based organizations to support movement toward a theology of radical

¹John 17:21.

²http://www.ucc.org/about-us_what-we-believe.

³Other types of congregations in the UCC such as yoked churches and larger parish congregations also run along the spectrum of ecumenism and could be categorized in this way, though the numbers of these types of churches are much smaller than the numbers of dual, federated, or Union UCC churches.

inclusivity of LGBTQ persons, has gained particular prominence in the UCC.⁴

In 2014, the UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) conducted an in-depth study of these 455 multiply-affiliated congregations. The purposes of this research project were to: (a) Provide a deeper understanding of the demographics, beliefs, and practices of multiply-affiliated UCC congregations; and (b) to



determine differences and similarities between multiply-affiliated UCC congregations and the average UCC congregation. A 35-question survey was sent by email to all multiply-affiliating congregations in the spring / summer of 2014 (see Appendix A); and results were analyzed and compared with results from the 2010 Faith Communities Today (FACT) Survey, as well as data collected through the annual Yearbook reporting process and stored within the UCC Data Hub, the denominational database that maintains all congregational and ministerial information. In all cases, the pastor or key lay leader of the congregation completed the survey.

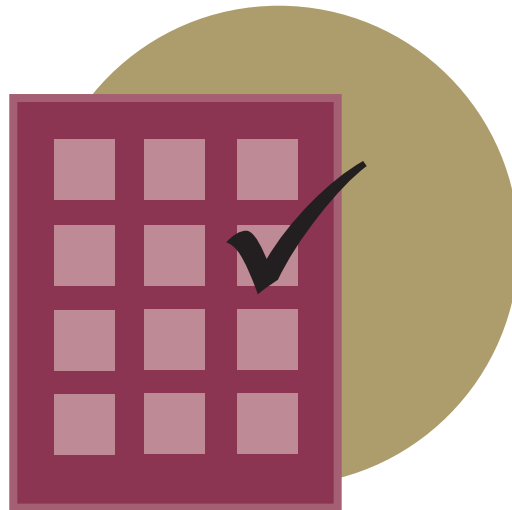
As the religious landscape of the U.S. becomes increasingly diverse, study of congregations that embody ecumenism as central to their very beliefs and practices can offer some insight into ways that all congregations might better navigate and respond to this increased diversity. Building relationships with other religious groups is part of the call of any given congregation situated within a local community, whether in an urban, suburban, or rural area. While not all congregations will affiliate with other denominations in the near future, it is important to take a closer look at those congregations that have done this in order to learn from the wisdom of their experiences.

⁴CARD has not begun to track these sorts of affiliations, though there may come a time when this will need to occur if more formal agreements are made between these bodies and the UCC. Some of these affiliations were captured in the study, though not comprehensively.

■ SURVEY RESULTS

In total, 131 congregations completed the survey out of 455 total multiply-affiliated congregations (28.8% response rate).⁵ Completion rate for the survey was 87%. Demographics for all multiply-affiliated UCC congregations were gathered from denominational records and annual Yearbook reporting in order to present a complete picture of these congregations.

⁵A 28.8% response rate demonstrates a high rate of return and provides enough information to generalize findings for the entire number of multiply-affiliated congregations.



DEMOGRAPHICS OF AFFILIATION

Two-thirds (66.5%) of all UCC multiply-affiliated congregations were identified as dual churches, and 27.5% were identified as federated churches. A smaller percentage (5.5%) of congregations identified as Union churches. The few churches listed as “other” included yoked, larger parish, and unknown affiliated churches. (See Figure 1)

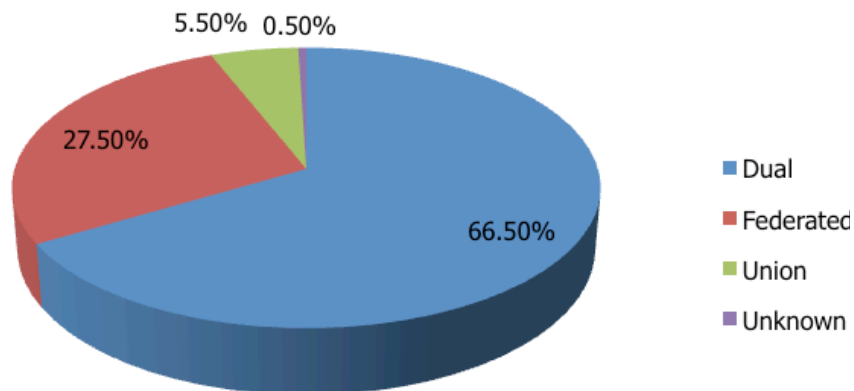
The vast majority (88.4%) of multiply-affiliated congregations was “dual” in the literal sense of the word—they were affiliated with only one other denomination. However, a couple of congregations (0.4%) identified with as many as four other denominations in addition to the UCC (making a total of five different affiliations). (See Figure 2)

The greatest number of denominational affiliations among these churches was with the United Methodist Church (115 affiliations, 25.3% of total ecumenical congregations). While the polity of the UMC and UCC are not generally congruent, the reason for this large number of affiliations could perhaps be due to the sheer number of UMC churches throughout the country, especially in more rural areas. In smaller cities and towns, merging and affiliating makes sense financially and logistically for many congregations.

American Baptist Churches USA constituted the second largest number of affiliations with UCC churches at 15.2%, perhaps due to similar congregational polities within both traditions. The Presbyterian Church (USA) constituted 13.0% of all affiliations, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—arguably the UCC’s most closely-related denomination—constituted the fourth largest number of affiliations at 9.5%. (See Figure 3)

The vast majority of multiply-affiliated congregations was “dual” in the literal sense of the word—they were affiliated with only one other denomination.

FIGURE 1: NATURE OF AFFILIATIONS



Notes: Dual designations include congregational self-identified affiliations such as “cooperating” and NACCC (National Association of Congregational Christian Churches). Union designations include the self-identified affiliation of “twin.” Congregations that are both dual and federated are categorized under “federated” for statistical analysis purposes.

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF AFFILIATIONS IN ADDITION TO THE UCC

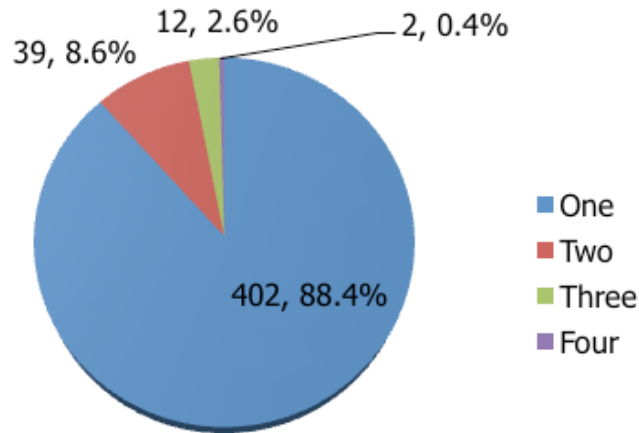
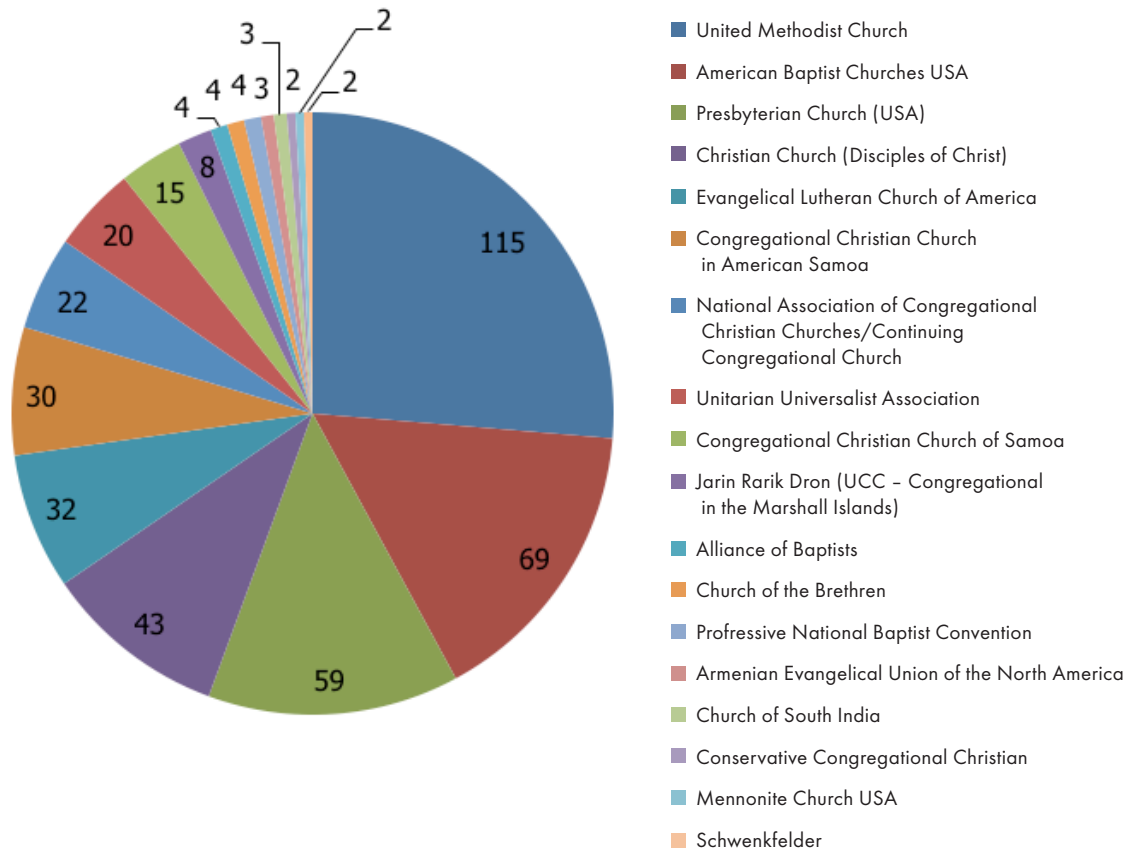


FIGURE 3: DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATIONS



Notes: Affiliations are listed in order, moving clockwise around the pie chart. This chart only lists denominations or traditions that are affiliated with more than one UCC congregation.

Several of the affiliated traditions in Figure 3 are denominations formed in relationship to the Congregational Church or Congregational Christian Church (the UCC's predecessor bodies) and are strongly tied to a particular ethnic group. For example, the Kosrae Congregational Church possesses origins in the Federated States of Micronesia (Island of Kosrae) and was formed in relationship to the Congregational Church. Additionally, a couple of these denominations were formed as a result of the merger in 1957 in order to preserve the tradition of a particular group of churches. For example, the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches—NACCC—was formed in 1955 because of the pending merger to form the UCC.

There were other denominations or traditions which were identified as each affiliating with only one UCC congregation. They included the following:

- American Evangelical Christian Church
- Church of God in Christ
- Community Christian Church
- DC Baptist Convention
- Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Covenant Church
- Iglesia Cristianas Congregacionales de Mexico
- Independent Baptist
- International Council of Community Churches
- Kosrae Congregational Christian Church
- Missionary Baptist Churches
- Reformed Church in America
- Samoa Council of Churches
- Metropolitan Community Churches

■ COMPARATIVE CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

When comparing demographic factors of all UCC congregations with multiply-affiliated congregations, statistically significant differences were found in several notable areas.⁶ (See Table 1)

Overall, multiply-affiliated churches had a higher average worship attendance. One reason that average attendance was larger but membership was smaller in ecumenical churches may be due to differences in reporting practice. In federated churches, where membership rolls are maintained separately for each denominational partner, membership is reported by how many UCC congregants joined only; however, worship attendance includes everyone in attendance. This may also explain why financial figures such as operating expenses and total income were larger than overall congregational averages. Although the average membership was smaller for these churches, the financials may have included both denominations.

Significantly more multiply-affiliated congregations identified as Asian/Pacific Islander than in the UCC as a whole.

Fewer deaths and transfers out were also present within multiply-affiliated congregations, which may indicate that the average age of members in multiply-affiliated congregations is lower than average UCC congregations.

Of the UCC's five annual special offerings, four of them received significantly fewer dollars from multiply-affiliated congregations than the average UCC congregation. Many of these churches split their denominational giving dollars between all affiliated denominations.⁷

In terms of a congregation's primary race / ethnicity, significantly more multiply-affiliated congregations identified as Asian / Pacific Islander than in the UCC as a whole. Given the variety of denominational affiliations tied with particular ethnic groups, this is not surprising.⁸

⁶Statistically significant differences are those differences between multiply-affiliated congregations and singly-affiliated congregations which exceed a certain threshold in statistical analyses. Items highlighted in the tables were significant at or below .05.

⁷In a 1989 sabbatical research report on merged and united churches, Rev. M. Michael Morse found that most merged churches follow the UCC pattern of dividing support equally amongst the affiliated denominations. In the case of UMC-UCC mergers, the payments to denominations were tied to UMC apportionments.

⁸The online survey was unable to attract respondents affiliated with the Church of South India, Moravian Church, Armenian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Marshallese Ministries (Jarín Rarik Dron), Reformed Church in America, and the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa, although there are UCC congregations with these affiliations.

TABLE 1: CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS

Demographic	Multiply-Affiliated Congregations	All UCC Congregations
Active Congregations	455	5244
Average Membership	185	191
Average Worship Attendance	91	79
Average Confirmations	3	4
Average Confessions	5	4
Average Transfers (In)	2	3
Average Reaffirmed	3	5
Average # Deaths	4	5
Average Transfers (Out)	2	3
Christian Education/Faith Formation Program	42%	52%
Youth Program	24%	27%
Open and Affirming	21%	22%
Web Presence/Active URLs	61%	62%
Accessible	76%	82%
Average One Great Hour of Sharing Offering	\$516	\$694
Average Neighbors in Need Offering	\$257	\$423
Average Christmas Fund Offering	\$330	\$520
Average Strengthen the Church Offering	\$169	\$254
Five for Five	8.8%	31%
White/Euro-American	76%	87%
African-American	3%	5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12%	4%
Hispanic/Latino (a)	0.4%	0.5%
Native American	0%	0.6%
Bi-Racial / Multi-Racial and Other	3%	3%
Average Operating Expense	\$201,270	\$163,989
Average Total Income	\$288,207	\$262,213
Average Basic Support	\$2,586	\$4,979

Note: Highlighted field = Statistically significant difference between groups

Aside from these differences, however, we find that there are more similarities between both groups demographically. Average expenses necessary to operate the church, Open and Affirming designations and accessibility percentages, among others characteristics, were not statistically significantly different in multiply-affiliated congregations.

COMPARATIVE MINISTERIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

When analyzing differences in clergy demographics, there is statistical significance in the increased percentage of Asian/Pacific Islander clergy in multiply-affiliated congregations. This is attributed directly to the large number of Asian/Pacific Islander congregations that are multiply-affiliated. In addition, more of the clergy in these types of congregations are male and have been in ministry longer than ministers in the average UCC congregation. (See Table 2)

TABLE 2: MINISTERIAL DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS

Demographic	Multiply-Affiliated Congregations	All UCC Congregations
Total number of clergy (actively serving a church)	465	5348
Gender	Male 64%; Female 35%	Male 58%; Female 42%; Transgender 0.1%
White/Euro-American	82%	89%
African-American	6%	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11%	3%
Hispanic/Latino(a)	0.5%	0.9%
Native American	0.0%	0.3%
Bi-Racial / Multi-Racial and Other	0.5%	1.3%
Age	64% are between the ages of 55 and 74	66% are between the ages of 55 and 74
Year Ordained	54% have been ordained between 15 and 34 years	42% have been ordained between 15 and 34 years
Average Salary (Pastoral Position)	\$31,443	\$32,566
Average Parsonage	\$9,907 / 41%	\$9,093 / 34%
Average Rent Allowance	\$15,792	\$17,471

Note: Highlighted field = Statistically significant difference between groups

Multiply-affiliated congregations also possessed a greater percentage of ministers authorized by other denominations than the average UCC church. Survey results indicated that 26% of all ministers in multiply-affiliated congregations were authorized by another denomination. 66% were UCC authorized ministers, and 8% were lay ministers.

THEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK

When compared with data from the 2010 Faith Communities Today (FACT) Survey,⁹ multiply-affiliated congregations were more likely to be theologically liberal than UCC congregations as a whole. (See Table 3) This is not surprising given that affiliation with multiple denominations or traditions may, in and of itself, be a factor that promotes a more progressive theology, though this has yet to be truly tested.

TABLE 3: CONGREGATIONAL THEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK

Theological Outlook	Ecumenical Survey	FACT 2010 Survey
Very liberal	19%	11%
Somewhat liberal	34%	23%
Moderate	28%	37%
Somewhat conservative	15%	24%
Very conservative	4%	4%

Note: Highlighted field = statistically significant difference between groups

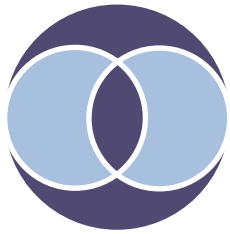
When using regression tests to determine whether certain denominational affiliations of ecumenical congregations were predictors of a more liberal theological outlook, we found that congregations affiliating with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Unitarian Universalist Association, and/or American Baptist Churches USA were more likely to predict theological liberalism in a church.¹⁰

Multiply-affiliated congregations are more likely to be theologically liberal than the average UCC congregation.

⁹Website: www.faithcommunitiestoday.org.

¹⁰This is not a particularly strong model statistically, since $R^2 = .114$; however, it is an important finding nonetheless.

HISTORIES OF DENOMINATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



The histories of multiply-affiliated congregations are rich and complex. (See Appendix B for selected histories of denominational partnerships)

Churches that were organized / founded as multiply-affiliated congregations during the 1700-1800s tended to be Union partnerships (German Reformed and Lutheran). Over time, many of these have either dissolved or have evolved into formal dual partnerships; but the remaining Union churches have survived for over 200 years.

It is interesting to note that out of all UCC congregations organized since 2000, 8% were formed with the expressed purpose of worshipping in a multiply-affiliated context.

Survey respondents provided detailed accounts of congregational histories and stories of multiple affiliations. Some dually-aligned partnerships began at the congregation's founding; and other partnerships occurred after congregations organized, usually as a means of survival for two declining churches.

Regarding the latter theme, nearly half (48%) of all multiply-affiliated congregations developed as a result of mergers / partnerships between two separate congregations, brought on by declining financial realities. The inability to afford a full-time pastor and declining membership led churches to partner with other congregations in similar situations, and this occurred especially among smaller churches and in smaller towns. The challenges of maintaining or repairing an older church building also encouraged mergers.

“The Congregation Church and Methodist Church of Monmouth federated in 1930 (+/-) when they were unable to sustain two large churches. For the most part, we function as one church which happens to have members from two different denominations.”

United Church of Monmouth, Monmouth, ME

26% of multiply-affiliated congregations partnered with other denominations intentionally, with the spirit of “we can do more together” and as a way to embrace diversity.

“COR, founded in 1968, caught the wave of ecumenism in the early 1980s around the time of COCU. We thought that through that work all Protestant churches would eventually unite and COR wanted to lead the way. The congregation wrote to all mainline denominations and asked who was interested in joining together as a wider church for our affiliation. Five denominations responded and in 1985 - after several years of study, fellowship and negotiation - we became united with them: UCC, UMC, CC (DOC), PC(USA) and the American Baptist Church that recently disassociated with us due to our adoption of inclusive policies.”

Community of Reconciliation Church, Pittsburgh, PA

Other congregations eased into a partnership over time through conversations, joint gatherings / worship and sometimes sharing a pastor. Some survey respondents described a trial period of sorts to experiment with partnerships. After a set time period, the congregation then voted whether to remain in partnership or not.

“The congregation was organized in 2003 with the intention of becoming affiliated with all four denominations. A four-year trial affiliation began in 2005; an agreement was completed in 2009.”

United Church of the San Juans, Ridgway, CO

Finally, a few congregations formed in more unique ways, with a combination of factors contributing to multiple affiliations.

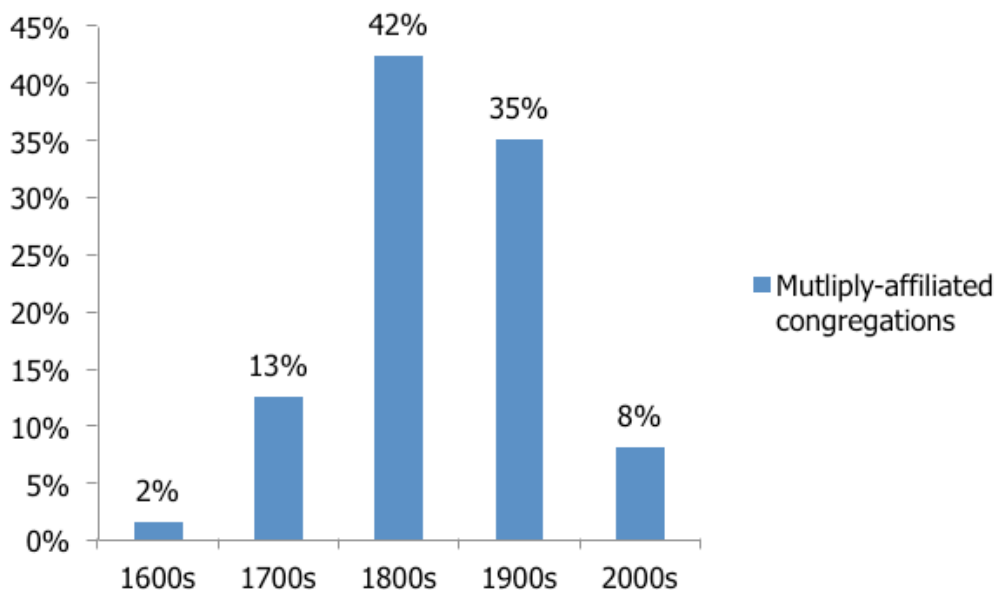
“In the 1960s a group of people attending an Evangelical and Reformed Church wanted to leave and form their own UCC congregation. After some discussion this group formed a union congregation with a PCUSA congregation.”

Countryside Trinity Church, Saginaw, MI

In studying the years of organization for congregations, results showed that 42% of multiply-affiliated congregations were organized during the 1800s, with 1888 being the average year congregations with UCC ties organized. In comparison, the average year organized by singly-affiliated UCC congregations was 1874. (See Figure 4) Interestingly, the 1970s experienced a renewed uptick in multiply-affiliated congregations in which 9% organized within that decade alone.

Nearly half of all multiply-affiliated congregations developed as a result of mergers/partnerships between two separate congregations.

FIGURE 4: MULTIPLY-AFFILIATED CONGREGATIONS BY YEAR ORGANIZED



■ WORSHIP



Questions around worship attributes were compared with identical questions from the FACT 2010 Survey. Results showed that multiply-affiliated congregations were more likely to hold more than one weekly worship service; and these services were more likely to vary in style from each other. Survey responses suggested that this may be attributed to serving bilingual community congregations, as well as diversity in varying theological outlooks of regularly participating adults. (See Table 4)

In addition, multiply-affiliated congregations were more likely to have changed their worship style in the past five years. This makes sense since the needs of the community members and / or the church leadership change over time; and it stands to reason that their openness to ecumenical relationships allows for more change and experimentation to be brought into the life of these congregations. One piece of evidence to support this theory is that the majority of survey respondents claimed to customize worship by mixing traditions and utilizing a variety of resources in order to find the right balance for their unique congregations; therefore, experimentation and change with worship is more acceptable within multiply-affiliated churches.

TABLE 4: WORSHIP ATTRIBUTES 1

Worship Attributes	Ecumenical Survey	FACT 2010 Survey
If you hold more than one service on a weekly basis, how different are these services from each other?		
Have only one service	71%	83%
Very similar or identical	8%	4%
One or more is somewhat different	8%	5%
One or more is very different	13%	8%
During the past five years, has your congregation changed worship style?		
No change	19%	36%
Changed a little	36%	31%
Changed somewhat	26%	19%
Changed a lot	9%	5%
Added a new service with different style	10%	9%

Note: Highlighted field = statistically significant difference ($p \leq .05$)

Multiply-affiliated congregations are more likely to have changed their worship style in the past five years.

WORSHIP STYLES

Worship styles within multiply-affiliated congregations were more fluid and changed depending on two key factors:

- Denominational affiliation of the pastor
- Theological make-up of the congregation

The denominational background of the pastor or pastor(s) in some cases also played a role as to how inclusive a worship experience was.

“Because our senior Pastor is Baptist in background and I, the other Pastor, am UCC born, we often struggle to understand each other’s quirky denominational ways that we take for granted. But it makes the worship richer.”

Harmony Creek Church, Kettering, OH

In some congregations, the theological make-up of the church members (predominately one denomination) determined their levels of acceptance of another denomination’s influence in worship.

Overall, 21% mentioned music and the arts as being a part of the worship experience in multiply-affiliated congregations. Examples included the use of acoustic folk instruments, a jazz band, praise teams and poetry as part of the sermon. The ecumenical nature of these congregations may allow for more non-traditional elements to be included within worship.

Interestingly, when compared to the 2010 FACT survey, analysis showed that giving testimony / sharing faith and reading / performing by children / youth were two worship attributes that were used significantly less frequently in worship within multiply-affiliated congregations. This significance may have been due to a smaller number of children and youth within these congregations in general. (See Table 5)

TABLE 5: WORSHIP ATTRIBUTES 2

Worship Attributes	Ecumenical Study	FACT 2010 Study
Giving Testimony/Sharing Faith	3.55	3.87
Prayer / Meditation Time	1.22	1.67
Organ	1.88	1.76
Electric Guitar, Bass, Keyboard	3.50	4.14
Drums and/or Percussion	3.72	3.91
Visual Projection Equipment	3.15	3.89
Reading / Performing by Children / Youth	2.91	3.11
Choir	2.04	2.26

Note: Highlighted field = statistically significant difference (p ≤ .05)

The use of a variety of worship resources was a common theme for leaders of multiply-affiliated congregations. 42% of church leaders tended to use a diversity of resources from many denominations and faiths, and not only the denominationally-affiliated resources of the particular congregation.

“Primarily our worship style leans toward a Baptist / Pentecostal style, infused with bits and pieces from traditional UCC and Lutheran traditions. We have a multicultural congregation so it’s important that everyone sees themselves in the worship.”

Abundant Peace UCC, Las Vegas, NV

“Dual-alignment has little effect on how we worship. We have our own style of worship and it provides the experience our people want.”

Margate Community Church, Margate, NJ

When planning worship, pastors of these congregations sought ways in which to appeal to all of the differences (theological, stylistic) within the congregation. In addition, the creation of worship planning teams consisting of members from each denominational partner was an important element for diversity in worship style, according to respondents.

“We follow the suggestions that make sense to us, keep us accountable, but don’t feel burdensome. That is the real art of liturgy planning—translating the intent of the tradition into an experience that speaks to the people in the pew today.”

Macalester Plymouth United Church, St. Paul, MN

“We are determined to relate to the people in the pews where they are, not be where the church has been.”

Danby Federated Church, Danby, NY

HYMNALS

When multiply-affiliated congregations were asked about the hymnals they used during worship service(s), 10% stated that they did not use hymnals at all, which supports the characteristic that these congregations are creative in developing their own format and style in worship. For those congregations that did utilize hymnals, 67% selected the use of “other hymnal(s)” not found on the list of choices in the survey. (See Table 6)

Other hymnals that were named by pastors included the following:

- *Pilgrim Hymnal*
- *The Faith We Sing*
- *Presbyterian Hymnal*
- *The Chalice Hymnal*
- *The Celebration Hymnal*

- *The German Evangelisches Gesangbuch* (used specifically for German worship)
- *Lutheran Book of Worship*
- *To God Be The Glory: Living Hymns*
- Japanese hymnal(s)
- Marshallese hymnal(s)
- *Voices United* (United Church of Canada)

10% of multiply-affiliated congregations do not use hymnals at all in worship.

Hymnals were not utilized as frequently during more contemporary services in which lyrics were sometimes projected from a screen. In addition, many congregations utilized a combination of hymnals to shape worship culture. Overall, it can be stated that multiply-affiliated congregations prefer to use a variety of worship resources that speak to their identities as ecumenically inclusive congregations.

“The Faith We Sing (UMC) and Hymns, Psalms, & Spiritual Songs (PCUSA, 1990) for traditional worship service; contemporary service uses no hymnals. The traditional services sing from the UMC hymnal and use other hymnals for responsive readings and versicle.”

Rolling Hills Community Church, Lago Vista, TX

TABLE 6: HYMNALS UTILIZED BY MULTIPLY-AFFILIATED UCC CONGREGATIONS

Hymnal	Percent
Other hymnal(s)	66.9
<i>The United Methodist Hymnal</i> (1989)	29.8
<i>The New Century Hymnal</i> (1995)	29.8
We don't use a hymnal	9.9
<i>Sing the Faith</i> (2003)	5.0
<i>Chalice Praise</i> (2002)	5.0
<i>Evangelical Lutheran Worship</i> (2006)	4.1
<i>The Hymnal - Evangelical & Reformed Church</i> (1941)	4.1
<i>Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal</i> (2013)	3.3
<i>Sing! Prayer and Praise</i> (2009)	2.5

■ COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND BUILDING USE

Most multiply-affiliated congregations organized and / or participated in service activities and community celebrations with other interfaith / ecumenical groups, though the frequency of these activities varied. Scores were given to each answer option, with 5 being “Always” and 1 being “Never.” Congregations collaborated most often around food-related endeavors, and local community celebrations and joint worship services occurred on a semi-regular basis. (See Figure 5)

Respondents were asked to share other activities that were not listed, yet were still important to note.

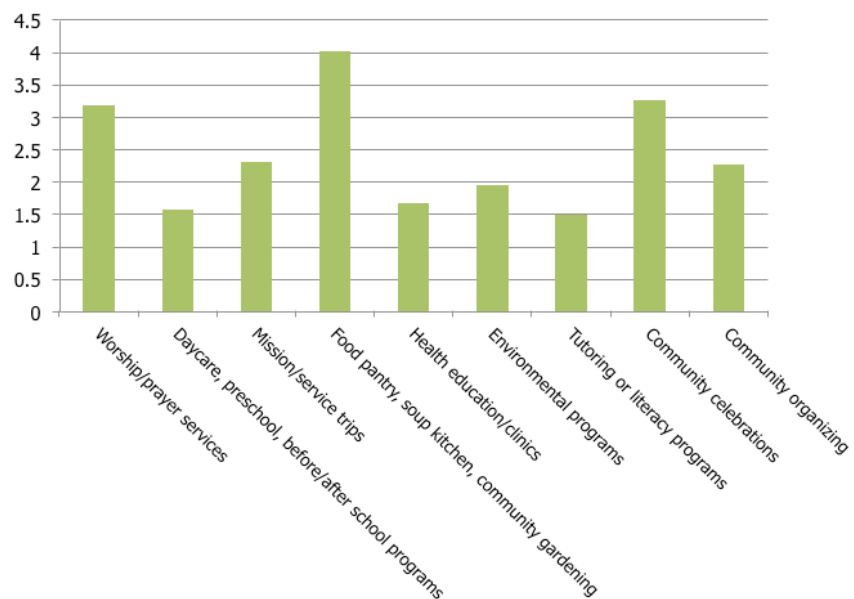
“Because of our ecumenical status we tend to support Church World Service and local missions more than denominational missions.”

Trinity Church, Shelburne Falls, MA

“We participated in the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition’s Day on the Hill with many different congregations. We also co-sponsored a day-long workshop with three other UCC churches on the issue of dementia.”

Macalester Plymouth United Church, St. Paul, MN

FIGURE 5: COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES



PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Over two-thirds (68%) of multiply-affiliated congregations indicated that they were the sole owners or mortgage holders for their buildings and properties. The remaining percentage of congregations' buildings were owned or mortgaged by an affiliating denominational body, equally owned / mortgaged among all affiliating denominational bodies, owned / mortgaged by a separate organization, or simply rented.

Some respondents shared unique issues around building and property ownership, with a few churches owning their buildings but not certain property rights, and different denominations owning various buildings.

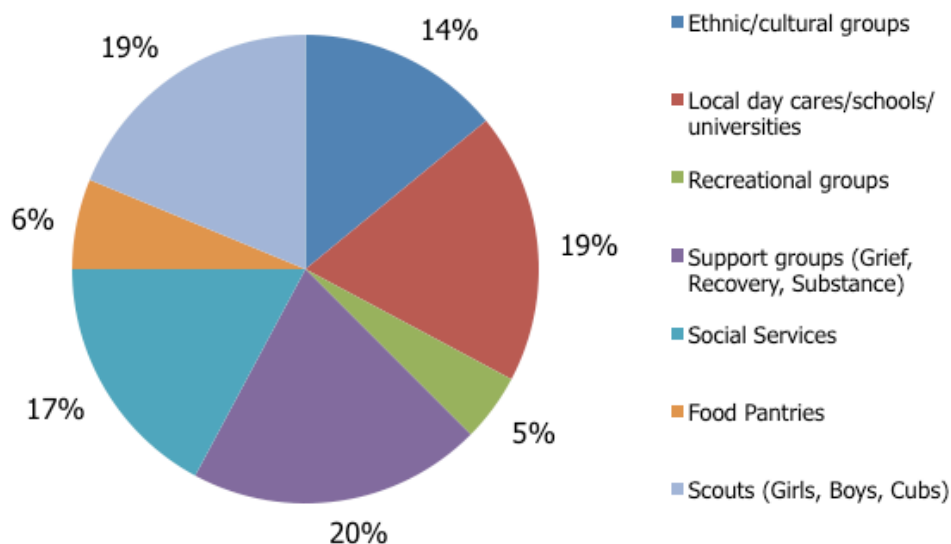
“The church [building] is owned by the UCC, the parsonage is owned by the UMC, and the Parish House is owned by the church. The Parish House houses the Sunday school, offices, chapel and other meeting space.”

United Parish of Lunenburg, Lunenburg, MA

BUILDING USE


On the theme of sharing a worship space with other local congregations, 73% were the sole congregational occupiers of their buildings. However, 86% of multiply-affiliated congregations indicated that they shared space with at least one other organization on a regular basis. These organizations varied greatly in scope and purpose. (See Figure 6)

FIGURE 6: SHARING BUILDING SPACE



Over half (54%) of all multiply-affiliated congregations held combined activities for the other congregations and / or organizations that shared their space. The most common combined activities included worship services, Association meetings, Vacation Bible Schools, concerts, and local school events.

Overall, these congregations are highly engaged within their communities, sharing space with local organizations and hosting and participating in activities and events that extend beyond the membership of congregations.

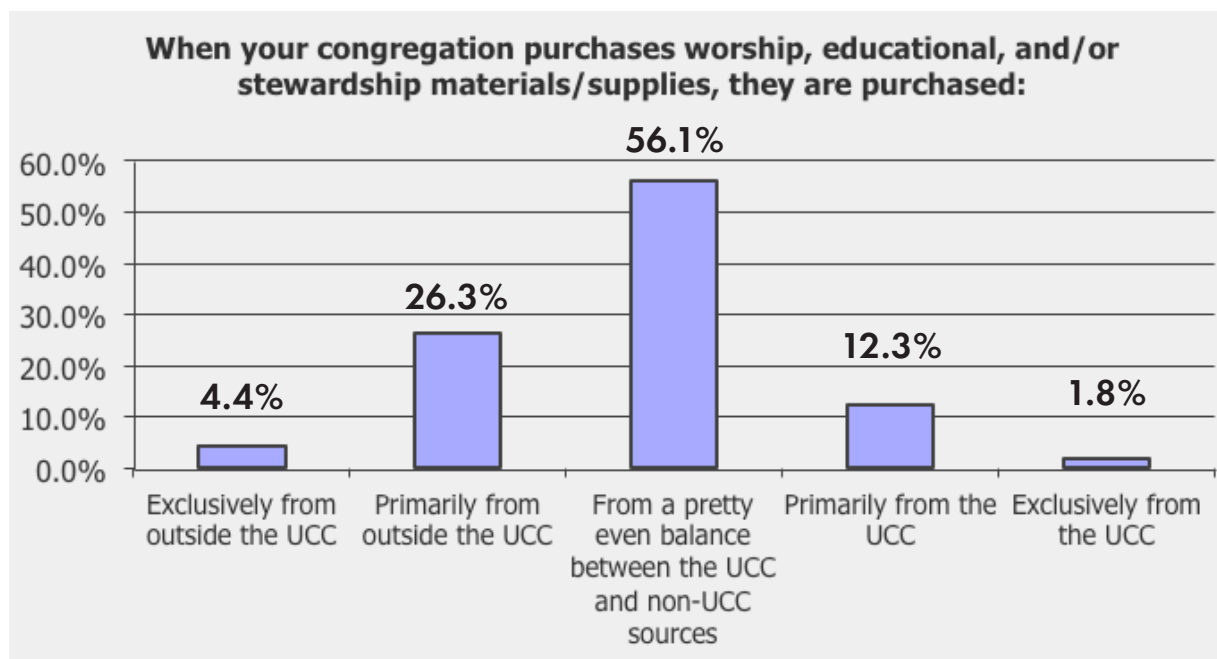


86% of multiply-affiliated congregations share space with at least one other organization on a regular basis.

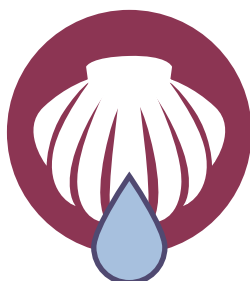
■ FAITH FORMATION AND SACRAMENTS

Over half (56%) of multiply-affiliated churches indicated that they purchase resources for worship, education, and stewardship from a pretty even balance between UCC and non-UCC sources. Over 30% stated that they purchase these resources primarily or exclusively from outside the UCC. (See Figure 7) This response correlates with the expressed need of these congregations to draw from a variety of traditions with less focus on one particular denomination's theological language or rituals.

FIGURE 7: RESOURCES / MATERIALS



BAPTISM



According to survey respondents, 91% of multiply-affiliating congregations indicated that their baptisms are recognized mutually by partnering denominations. Less than 1% of these congregations indicated that the baptisms performed are recognized by some denominations and not others.

Attempting to capture any one definitive commonality within these congregations is challenging. Baptismal liturgies and practices take many forms due to varying factors which makes them unique; however, three general themes emerged from the analysis.

First, 20% of congregations incorporated baptismal traditions / liturgies from each of the affiliating denominations.

“Our baptism liturgy is unique to our congregation but has elements from all four of our denominational connections.”

Church of East Lansing, East Lansing, MI

“Baptisms are held in church usually by water to the forehead. The liturgy is from the UMC hymnal and adapted when UCC members are being baptized.”

Federated Church of Bristol, Bristol, VT

Second, 19% indicated that baptismal practices and liturgies depend on the polity preferences or the native languages of the individual or family. For example, in a multiply-affiliated bilingual congregation, the baptism service will be performed fully or partially in that preferred language.

“If they are American Baptist, we use the baptismal and use total immersion. If they are UCC, I sprinkle from a font. If they are non-members of our church (we require that everyone chooses one or the other when they go through new member class), then they choose.”

Haskins Community Church, Haskins, OH

Third, 17% of congregations performed only one specific denominational baptismal ritual. Some congregations favored one denomination’s Book of Worship and utilizes its liturgy singularly.

“I continue to use the service that was in place upon my arrival. It is the Lutheran service from the green Lutheran Book of Worship, which is not the current Lutheran worship book.”

Himmel’s Church, Dornsife, PA

Additionally, the denomination of the pastor sometimes played a role in the ways in which the baptism was performed.

“The pastor is free to decide upon the format. It tends to be more Presbyterian when the pastor is Presbyterian and more UCC when the pastor is from the UCC.”

Fairfield Glade Community Church, Fairfield Glade, TN

Overall, these congregations utilize a diverse set of liturgies and practices for baptism and communion that are highly contextualized depending upon denominational affiliations, along with the particular needs and preferences of congregants.

COMMUNION



Over one-third (37%) of multiply-affiliated congregations do not believe that there is anything unique about how communion is conducted in worship, expressing that communion follows a “traditional” Christian service. With the majority of UCC multiply-affiliated congregations partnered with other mainline Protestant denominations (UMC, American Baptist, DOC, PCUSA, etc.), this could account for general perception of uniformity in practice. However, responses indicated that the idea of what is a “traditional” communion varies.

“The beliefs and traditions are common to both, so offering communion easily embraces both denominations.”

Trinity Church of Northborough, Northborough, MA

“Pretty traditional, wine and juice utilized, intinction is the norm. We do it ‘in the round’ frequently and each member serves another.”

United Church of Bethel, Bethel, VT

Many congregations’ communion traditions around liturgy and style were based on their particular denominational affiliations, and the frequency in which communion was offered varied as well. While most congregations utilized one particular denomination’s communion liturgy, 23% sought to embrace their affiliating denominational traditions in some way, rotating practices and liturgies.

“At least quarterly and for special occasions like Maundy Thursday, we observe communion in the UCC tradition based on the UCC Book of Worship. The rest of the time, we observe communion based on the Disciples of Christ tradition.”

Christian and Congregational Church, Eureka, KS

“We have forms that are from each tradition as well forms created for our specific context. We rotate them monthly.”

The Eliot Church, Natick, MA

“Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month, one month by distribution and the next month by intinction.”

Federated Church of Castleton, Castleton, VT

Instead of alternating communion styles in order to include all denominations, 17% blended traditions together.

“We have developed a communion liturgy from denominational resources that is faithful to both of our traditions.”

Zion’s Stone Church of West Penn Township, New Ringgold, PA

“We glean elements for our practice of communion from our four denominations.”

The Peoples Church of East Lansing, East Lansing, MI

MEMBERSHIP

Roughly 60% of multiply-affiliated congregations do not maintain separate membership rolls for UCC members and members of partnering denomination(s), and 40% do maintain separate rolls.

Survey respondents indicated that, on average, roughly 85% of a church’s congregants were aware of the multiple denominational affiliations of their congregation. However, there were some complex patterns around ecumenical membership identity. Pastors articulated that some individuals identified with one denomination over other(s) (30%), some identified with all affiliated denominations equally (20%), and the greatest percentage (37%) didn’t identify with any particular partnering denomination. (See Table 7)

On average, roughly 85% of a church’s congregants are aware of the multiple denominational affiliations of their congregation.

“I think a little of all three. 1/3 identifies with one or the other denomination; 1/3 identifies with both; and 1/3 doesn’t care.”

Peace United Church, Long Prairie, MN

“Those who are UM, identify themselves as UM, those who are UCC, identify themselves as UCC, the rest do not identify with any particular denomination.”

United Parish of Lunenburg, Lunenburg, MA

“Some also identify as ‘Federated’ meaning that they chose to not identify with a denomination, but joined the church.”

Federated Church of Marlborough, Marlborough, NH

TABLE 7: CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY

They identify with one particular partnering denomination over the other(s).	30.2%
They identify with all partnering denominations equally.	20.7%
They don't identify with any particular partnering denomination.	37.1%
I'm not sure.	12.1%

MEMBERSHIP AND CONFIRMATION CLASSES

One-fourth (25%) of multiply-affiliating congregations conducted confirmation or new member classes that provided information about each affiliating denomination, with an end goal of asking each participant to choose their denomination of membership. This was most common in churches that identified as federated but was also present in Union congregations.

“I have background in both denominations and present both to the confirmation class. We don't get a lot of new members. I have done individual sessions with new members and share information on both denominations, emphasizing the one which the member has chosen to join.”

Himmel's Church, Dornsife, PA

Surprisingly, 17% of churches did not have classes but instead provided resources and held individual meetings to discuss affiliating denominations and other items. Members then chose to join the church without specifying a particular denominational tie or chose to join one of the denominations affiliated with the church.

“Meetings are with both sides involved. When the new members join they then make a decision as to which tradition they claim.”

Jerusalem Western Salisbury, Allentown, PA

Roughly 11% of these congregations stated that they do not conduct any type of class or individual series of meetings.

“We welcome people of many faiths. There is no ‘indoctrination.’ People are received in a simple welcoming ceremony.”

Riverside Salem UCC / Disciples, Grand Island, NY

Lastly, 11% held classes; but members joined the community and became affiliated with all partnered denominations of the church.

“Adult new members and confirmands become members of both denominations upon joining. That is explained as part of the new member / confirmation classes. We discuss the polity of both groups and how we are organized in a unique way.”

St. John's Westminster Union Church, Cincinnati, OH

■ WIDER DENOMINATIONAL PARTICIPATION

About 80% of respondents stated that their congregations participate in UCC-related regional/national events or meetings always, often or sometimes, with 20% rarely or never participating in wider UCC events or meetings. Not surprisingly, 45% of congregations participated more in local association and clergy group meetings due to geographical proximity. Participation in Conference and national setting meetings and events was roughly 38% of all multiply-affiliated congregations.

With regard to participation in wider church meetings and events of (non-UCC) partner denominations, 72% of congregations participate always, often or sometimes. For the most part, leaders were encouraged to participate equally in wider church meetings and events for all affiliating denominations. However, respondents indicated that participating in all denominational wider church activities was challenging, especially due to limited time for meetings and financial constraints associated with attending all gatherings.

It is interesting to note that one-fifth (20%) of congregations participate whenever meetings are held, though this is dependent largely upon the affiliating nature of particular congregations. One response described participation by members as separate, yet bridged by the church leaders.

“The UCCs go to UCC meetings, the Lutherans go to Lutheran meetings, and the pastors go to both.”

Jerusalem Western Salisbury, Allentown, PA

Others congregations appoint church representatives/delegates that attend each regional denominational gathering.

“Representatives attend the UMC and UCC Annual Conference meetings, and a few occasionally attend other workshops etc. offered by each denomination.”

United Parish of Lunenburg, Lunenburg, MA

When asked to share what types of events pastors or congregants attended with affiliating denomination(s), responses included workshops/educational training events, Synod Assembly, Biennial General Assembly, retreats for youth and/or adults, annual conference meetings, presbytery meetings, and clergy meetings.

Finally, 28% rarely or never participate in events/meetings held by (non-UCC) denominational partners for varying reasons such as time constraints and geographical proximity, which were similar reasons why these congregations do not participate in UCC wider church activities as well.¹¹

¹¹In a 1989 sabbatical research report on merged and united churches, Rev. M. Michael Morse argued that reasons for concentrating on one denomination were twofold: 1) A lack of familiarity with the other denomination and 2) a feeling of being an “outsider” in the other denomination. These factors may also contribute to infrequent participation in wider church gatherings.

LIVING ECUMENICALLY

In order to explore how multiple affiliations impact these congregations as a whole, survey respondents were asked to identify their levels of agreement with a series of statements. A majority of survey participants indicated they either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the following statements:

- Because of our ecumenical nature, this congregation is more willing than other congregations to try new things and make changes. (59%)
- This congregation is a good example for other congregations that want to develop ecumenical and interfaith partnerships. (60%)
- Our mission, purpose, and identity as a congregation are deeply tied to our ecumenical nature. (57%)
- Our ecumenical nature is a positive factor in resolving conflicts that arise within our congregation. (55%)

“Because we have been federated for nearly ten years, we have served as an example to other union and shared ministry churches considering similar relationships”

Zion’s Stone Church of West Penn Township, New Ringgold, PA

“I think this congregation has a unique story to tell about the pain and possibility that can come from merging congregations. This is a very important story that needs to be told more broadly as small congregations face closing. It is not easy, but new life is possible.”

Macalester Plymouth United Church, St. Paul, MN

The strongest percentage of disagreement among respondents was on the following statement: Our ecumenical nature provides us with a clearer sense of mission and purpose than other congregations (20% “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”).

“This congregation has a ways to go to truly represent an ecumenical partnership. We are a work in progress, and with God’s help we will make strides in this area in the upcoming year.”

Lake Preston UCC/UMC, Lake Preston, SD

“One disadvantage of being ecumenical is that we are not well connected with any of the denominations other than the one that the pastor is affiliated with, which for us is UCC for many years. Also, because there is so much back history about needing to collaborate and compromise in order to build a fellowship, I think that there is fear and aversion to conflict - not wanting to offend to break apart...”

Trinity Church, Shelburne Falls, MA

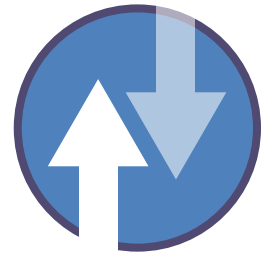
In general, however, multiply-affiliated congregations envisioned themselves as examples for other congregations around developing ecumenical / interfaith partnership and creating space for trying new things and making changes.

Multiply-affiliated congregations envision themselves as examples for other congregations around developing ecumenical/ interfaith partnerships.

CONFLICT

Survey participants were asked to indicate levels of conflict within the congregation around specific, yet common issues. Overwhelmingly, the majority of responses indicated little to no conflicts on the following:

- Theological / doctrinal differences between partnering denominations
- Changes in worship styles
- Changes in programs of the congregation
- Pastor or lay leadership styles
- Conflict between staff and/or clergy



The greatest percentages around conflict were related to church finances and LGBT inclusion. Roughly 36% of congregations reported some level of conflict (even if minimal) around church finances.

“We experience anxiety, especially around issues of finance—but nothing like conflict.”

Peoples Church of Chicago, Chicago, IL

About 31% of multiply-affiliated congregations experienced some conflict around LGBT inclusion and / or becoming Open and Affirming.

“I am a lesbian pastor in this church with no other out LGBT people. The church is now in the process of discernment of possibly beginning an ONA program or some similar program from one of our denominations. It has been a steep learning curve since I came to the church 1.5 years ago.”

Trinity Church, Shelburne Falls, MA

“[There was] a suggestion that we leave the UMC over LGBT issues. Instead we are moving to become a Reconciling Network Church.”

United Church of Theford, Theford, VT

Though not significant, some respondents named challenges around pastoral transitions common to all congregations.

“This church is emerging from several years of transition, following a long, steady burn-out in the final years of a 29-year pastorate. The conflicts have not been major and they are subsiding with trust in new leadership.”

United Parish of Brookline, Brookline, MA

■ JOYS AND CHALLENGES

Survey respondents shared many joys and challenges associated with leading and participating in multiply-affiliated congregations. Most joys centered on accessibility to a diversity of resources, experiencing different baptismal practices, flexibility and inclusivity in worship styles, and hospitality. Some cite growth of the church and / or the pastor as contributors of joy.

“As a UU minister it has allowed me to speak on a wide variety of spiritual and religious topics that normally I wouldn’t. I was amazed at how much I had been limiting myself because I was afraid of hurt feelings. I will return to UU churches with a greater awareness of this about myself.”

First Parish Church United, Westford, MA

The ability to work together and build stronger ties was viewed as joy in ecumenical relations.

“Having two heritages to draw from has made introducing change almost a breeze! The theological richness of our two traditions is staggering and so helpful in balancing the theological dribble of today.”

Millbury Federated Church, Millbury, MA

“I must admit that I am a bit of a church geek. I enjoy being closely affiliated with the other mainline denominations with whom we affiliate. I would seek to reach out to build relationships with Methodist and Presbyterian clergy even if I wasn’t in an Ecumenical Shared Ministry. My joy is in seeing lives changed and rebuilt, renewed and recharged.”

United Church of Montbello, Denver, CO

Overall, respondents expressed enjoyment in exploring and learning from one another.

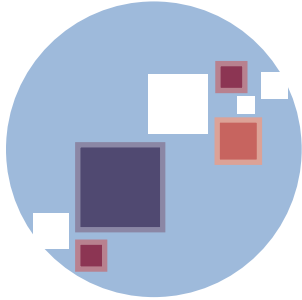
“We have enjoyed theological dialogue, the broad palate for worship, and being a place where interfaith marriages and dialogue in general can flourish.”

The Eliot Church, Natick, MA

“We are blessed to have more than one option for any issue - we can take what works best for us in our context.”

Trinity Church UCC/UMC, West Point, NE

With regard to challenges, internal divisions were the most common for congregations living in ecumenical partnerships, though these challenges are most likely common for all congregations in general. Specific issues that impacted internal divisions included theological differences and leadership changes.



“Denominations have theological differences; to pretend they don’t is to set yourself up for problems. However, we aim not for a ‘stew’ - where we are all cooked down into one, but a ‘salad’ - where we are all together in the same bowl but you can make out the different ingredients.”

Harmony Creek Church, Kettering, OH

“The predominance of Baptist culture is uncomfortable for some members. [There are] differences of opinion around communion, baptism, etc.”

Circle of Mercy, Asheville, NC

Differences in search and call processes among denominations presented challenges for some congregations.

“Currently, a Pastor Search Team is at work seeking to identify a candidate for the next pastor. Because three of our denominations have a ‘call’ system and one a ‘placement’ system that has presented a few problems.”

United Church of the San Juans, Ridgway, CO

Another major challenge for ministers of multiply-affiliated congregations was having “double / triple the workload.” Many respondents expressed experiencing double the meetings, double (or more) financial appeals, and double the record keeping.

“The Conference and denominational leadership for both denominations put pressure on us to participate in their activities. They usually do not consider that we are ‘split’ two ways in our support and activities.”

Lihue United Church, Lihue, HI

“As the pastor I am expected to attend twice the meetings as most one denominational pastors. Another challenge is to try and encourage denominational loyalty.”

Confirmation curriculum is hard to find that isn't denomination based so I'm using Head to the Heart by Faith Inkubators."

Tulare United Church, Tulare, SD

Positively, 27% of congregations felt that they did not have ecumenical challenges that could not be overcome in time. Responses indicated that there might have been conflict earlier on in a partnership; but with practice and experience this became less of a challenge over time.

"We do not see any insurmountable challenges with this relationship. This has been our tradition as a congregation for a long time, so we have a lot of practice being an ecumenical shared ministry."

The Eliot Church, Natick, MA

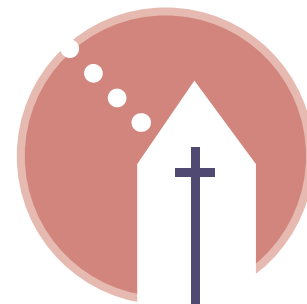
"In a largely post-denominational culture, the denominational traditions and particular theologies become trivia and curiosities, rather than guiding principles."

The Peoples Church of East Lansing, East Lansing, MI

A challenge for ministers of multiply-affiliated congregations was having "double the workload"—double the meetings, double the financial appeals, and double the record keeping.

■ CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this report provides us with some important insights into the life of multiply-affiliated UCC congregations. When compared with singly-affiliated UCC congregations, churches with multiple affiliations tend to have higher average worship attendance. These churches contribute significantly less to the UCC-specific offerings and giving campaigns because many churches have to split giving between all affiliating denominations. Interestingly, we found a statistically significant difference in the primary race / ethnicity of these congregations, which consist of more Asian / Pacific Islander clergy and congregations when compared with all UCC clergy and congregations.



More congregations are affiliated with the United Methodist Church than with any other denomination. More than half of these churches identify as being dual, meaning they maintain one unified membership roster and operate financially as one church. Multiply-affiliated congregations have long and complex histories, and many times the decision to affiliate is a financial one.

The majority of congregations only hold one worship service per week. However, for those that hold more than one weekly service, each service tends to differ in worship style or tradition. Worship styles are less rigid in format and are more likely to have changed over the last five years than the average UCC congregation.

The denominational background of the minister and / or congregants can influence the style and formality of worship. Leaders of multiply-affiliated congregations tend to use a greater variety of resources and tend to shy away from denominational resources in order to appeal to the diverse worshipping community. This explains why more than half of respondents purchased materials for worship, education and stewardship from non-UCC sources.

The majority of congregations are the sole building owners of their worship location and do not share the space with any other churches. However, sharing with local community organizations such as support and cultural groups is very common.

Baptisms and communion can take many forms. Baptisms of multiply-affiliated congregations blend the traditions of their partners, and adopt the polity style preferred by individuals or families. Some congregations simply utilize one tradition's liturgy and practice for these sacraments. Again, the background of the pastor can play a role in these practices.

Members of multiply-affiliated congregations identify in many ways. Some identify as being a member of one denomination only, and others identify as members of all affiliating denominations. Others feel as though they belong to one unified church, which ultimately transcends denominations.

UCC multiply-affiliated churches report that they participate more in regional meetings and events held by the UCC than that of their partnering denominations. Conflicts within churches are not frequent; and when they arise, finances are often the issue. Ecumenical joys can be found in the increased access to resources and a larger network, the ability to build stronger ties, and increased diversity. Challenges are expected in any partnership, with the most common being theological differences internally. This carries over to the selection of church ministers where call and placement processes vary by denomination.

Much can be learned from multiply-affiliated congregations that can enhance ecumenical and interfaith relationships among singly-affiliated UCC congregations. More research is needed in order to determine whether these congregations face less conflict and display more ecumenical cooperation than the average UCC congregation. However, this preliminary data suggests that this is indeed the case.

In the future, these types of congregations may become more prevalent due to the decline of mainline Protestant denominations. More partnerships between congregations will be forged, and increased cooperation among congregations within any given local community will need to occur in order to accomplish the transformative work and ministry needed within a particular context. Only time will tell. However, if the results of this report are any indication of what we can expect for congregations in the future, there is hope and promise for the church in the ecumenical and interfaith age.

■ APPENDIX A: UCC ECUMENICAL CONGREGATIONS SURVEY

Greetings! Your congregation has been identified as one of the United Church of Christ's Dual, Federated, Union, or other multiply-affiliated congregations. The UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD) is gathering information about congregations like yours in order to share knowledge with the wider church about strengths of ecumenical churches, key differences and similarities, and overall demographic statistical comparisons with other UCC churches. The following in-depth survey is one way in which we are collecting this important data.

Information we receive through these in-depth surveys will be shared with the wider church in a comprehensive report and with other religious researchers and scholars for increased knowledge and understanding. Your individual survey responses, however, will not be personally attributed to you or your church and will not be shared with anyone beyond the CARD office. At the end of the survey, you will be asked for the name and location of your congregation--this is only for statistical purposes and will be used to match UCC Yearbook information about your congregation such as membership and worship attendance as part of the analysis phase.

Would you take some time to complete this survey? We would greatly appreciate your open, honest feedback about the ways your congregation functions ecumenically. The in-depth survey should take about 30-40 minutes to complete.

Deadline for survey completion is June 30, 2014. Thank you so much for your participation; and if you have any questions please contact Taylor Billings, Research Specialist, at billingt@ucc.org.

Blessings on your ministry!

BASIC INFORMATION

1. Please select the denomination(s) your congregation is affiliated with, other than the United Church of Christ. (Select all that apply.)

- Alliance of Baptists
- Armenian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Church of South India
- United Methodist Church
- Reformed Church in America
- American Baptist
- Unitarian Universalist Association
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS)

- Episcopal Church
- Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa (CCCAS)
- Schwenkfelder
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Moravian Church
- Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Marshallese Ministries (Jarin Rarik Dron)
- Congregational Christian
- Other (please specify) _____

2. What is the nature of your partnership(s)?

- Dual
- Federated
- Both Dual and Federated
- Multiple Charge
- Union
- Other (please specify) _____

3. Please share a brief history of your congregation in terms of its denominational affiliations. (For example, when were partnerships formed? Under what circumstances? Any significant changes in affiliation?)

WORSHIP

4. How many worship services does your congregation hold on a weekly basis?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- More than 3

5. If you hold more than one service on a weekly basis, how different are these services from each other?

- We have only one service in a typical week
- Very similar or identical in style
- One or more is somewhat different in style from the other(s)
- One or more is very different in style from the other(s)

6. Which hymnal(s) do you use during worship service(s)? (Select all that apply.)

- Moravian Book of Worship (1995)
- Sing the Faith (2003)
- Sing! Prayer and Praise (2009)
- Evangelical Lutheran Worship (2006)
- Hymns for the People (2007)
- Hymnal: A Worship Book (1992)
- Chalice Praise (2002)
- Hymnbook for Christian Worship (1970)
- The United Methodist Hymnal (1989)
- The Hymnal of the Reformed Church (1920)
- Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal (2013)
- Rejoice in the Lord (1986)
- Singing the Journey (2005)
- Worship & Song (2011)
- The New Century Hymnal (1995)
- Singing the Living Tradition (1993)
- The Hymnal Evangelical & Reformed Church (1941)
- We don't use a hymnal
- Other hymnal(s) (please specify): _____

7. How often are the following a part of your congregation's worship service(s)? (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

- Electric guitar, bass, and/or keyboard
- Piano
- A time for members to testify about their faith
- Confession of Sin/Assurance of Pardon
- Meditation or prayer time
- Choir music
- Reading/recitation of creeds or statements of faith
- Visual projection equipment
- Organ
- Arts/dance
- Sermon
- Mission moment

- Children's message
- Reading or performing by children or youth
- Drums and/or percussion
- Other (please specify below)

Comments: _____

8. During the past five years, has your congregation changed the style of any of its worship services and/or added a new service with a different/similar style of worship? (Check all that apply.)

- No change in style
- Changed style a little
- Changed style somewhat
- Changed style a lot
- Added a new service with different style of worship
- Added a new service with similar style of worship

9. As a leader of a multiply affiliated congregation, how do you plan and lead worship in ways that are unique to your context? (For example, do you incorporate multiple denominational litanies or practices into your congregation's worship service(s)? What are you most attentive to when planning worship?)

BUILDING/SPACE USE

10. Who officially owns your church's building/worship space?

- We, the church, are the sole owner/mortgage holder.
- We, the church, are the owner/mortgage holder but we also have a grant mortgage from a partnering denominational organization.
- The UCC Conference or Association is the owner/mortgage holder.
- The building is equally owned/mortgaged by all partnership denominations.
- The building is owned/mortgaged by a partner denomination or regional body.
- Another organization is the owner/mortgage holder.
- We do not own a building but rent space for worship.
- Other (please specify): _____

11. How many other congregations use your building space for worship?

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more
- We do not own a building space for other congregations to use
- If applicable, please list the other congregations that use your building space for worship: _____

12. How many organizations use your building on a regular basis?

- None
- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10 or more
- We don't own a building for organizations to use
- If applicable, please list the organizations that use your building on a regular basis: _____

13. Have you ever held any combined activities for the other congregations or organizations that use your building space?

- Yes
- No
- We don't own the building
- If applicable, please describe the types of activities that you have held: _____

FAITH FORMATION AND MEMBERSHIP

14. As a leader of a multiply affiliated congregation, how do you conduct baptisms in ways that are unique to your context? _____

15. Are baptisms mutually recognized by your congregation's partnering denomination(s)?

- Yes
- No
- Recognized by some but not others
- Don't know

16. As a leader of a multiply affiliated congregation, how do you lead communion in ways that are unique to your context? _____

17. How are new member and confirmation classes conducted in your congregation in ways that honor all denominations affiliated with your congregation? _____

18. In your opinion, what percentage of your congregation knows that the church is multiply affiliated?

Percentage: _____

19. How do the majority of individuals in your congregation identify themselves denominationally?

- They identify with one particular partnering denomination over the other(s).
- They identify with all partnering denominations equally.
- They don't identify with any particular partnering denomination.
- I'm not sure.

Comments on your above response: _____

20. Does your congregation maintain separate membership rolls for UCC members and members of the partnering denomination(s)?

- Yes
- No

WIDER CHURCH PARTICIPATION

21. How often does your congregation participate in UCC related regional or national meetings/events?

- We participate whenever meetings/events are held.
- We often participate in meetings/events.
- We sometimes participate in meetings/events.
- We rarely participate in meetings/events.
- We never participate in meetings/events.

If applicable, please list the types of meetings and events that your congregation has participated in over the last few years: _____

22. How often does your congregation participate in regional or national meetings/events held by your congregation's partnering denomination(s)?

- We participate whenever meetings/events are held.
- We often participate in meetings/events.
- We sometimes participate in meetings/events.
- We rarely participate in meetings/events.
- We never participate in meetings/events.

If applicable, please list the types of meetings and events that your congregation has participated in over the last few years: _____

23. When your congregation purchases worship, educational, and/or stewardship materials/supplies, they are purchased:

- Exclusively from outside the UCC
- Primarily from outside the UCC
- From a pretty even balance between the UCC and non-UCC sources
- Primarily from the UCC
- Exclusively from the UCC

24. Did your congregation participate in the UCC's Mission:1 or Mission 4/1 Earth church-wide efforts?

- Yes, we participated in both efforts.
- Yes, we participated on one of these efforts.

- No, but we considered participating.
- No, and we did not consider participating.

ECUMENICAL/INTERFAITH ACTIVITY AND CHURCH CONFLICT

25. How often has your congregation participated in, or organized, the following ecumenical or interfaith activities/ services in the past year (e.g. in collaboration with other UCC/non-UCC churches or faith groups, not as an individual congregation)? (Regularly, Often, Occasionally, Rarely, Never)

- Worship/prayer services
- Daycare, preschool, before/after school programs
- Mission/service trips
- Food pantry, soup kitchen, food donations, community gardening
- Health education/clinics
- Environmental programs
- Tutoring or literacy programs
- Community celebrations
- Community organizing/social justice/advocacy (specify below)
- Other (specify below)

Comments: _____

26. Please indicate the amount of conflict within the congregation around the following issues over the past 12 months: (No conflict, Some conflict, Major conflict, Major conflict with leaders or people leaving, I don't know)

- Theological/doctrinal differences between partnering denominations
- Church finances
- Changes in worship styles
- Changes in programs of the Congregation
- Pastoral leadership style(s)
- Lay leadership style(s)
- Conflict between staff and/or clergy
- Issues regarding inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons and/or issues around becoming an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation.
- Other (specify below)

Comments: _____

27. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: (Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree)

- Our ecumenical nature is a positive factor in resolving conflicts that arise within our congregation.
- Our ecumenical nature provides us with a clearer sense of mission and purpose than other congregations.
- Because of our ecumenical nature, this congregation is more willing than other congregations to try new things and make changes.
- Our mission, purpose, and identity as a congregation are deeply tied to our ecumenical nature.
- This congregation is a good example for other congregations that want to develop ecumenical and interfaith partnerships.

Comments on your responses (optional): _____

FINAL THOUGHTS

28. What joys have you experienced with regard to the ecumenical nature of your congregation? _____

29. What challenges have you faced with regard to the ecumenical nature of your congregation, if any? _____

30. Would you like to share any additional thoughts about this aspect of your congregation that were not previously addressed in the survey? _____

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

31. Please select the option that reflects your ministerial authorization.

- UCC authorized minister
- Authorized minister in another denomination
- Lay pastor

32. What type of area is your congregation located?

- Rural area or open country
- Village or town of less than 10,000
- Larger town or a small city with a population between 10,000 and 49,000
- A suburb around a city with a population of 50,000 or more
- An older residential area in a city with a population of 50,000 or more
- A downtown or central area of a city with a population of 50,000 or more

33. How would you describe the theological outlook of the majority of regularly participating adults?

- Very conservative
- Somewhat conservative
- Moderate
- Somewhat progressive or liberal
- Very progressive or liberal
- Fairly even balance between conservative and progressive

34. Church Information:

Name: _____

City/Town: _____

State: _____

35. Would you be willing to participate in any follow-up surveys or interviews regarding this topic?

- Yes
- No

■ APPENDIX B: SELECTED HISTORIES OF DENOMINATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Begun 1741, and continued as a Union Church until the 1990's (same facility, but separate congregations with separate staffs, services, committees, etc.) Our church went through the same pressures from the judicatories to split away from each other that other Union churches did in the 1950's to the 1980's. Finally the congregations put it to a vote, and each congregation wanted to stay here! Neither could imagine leaving this historic and beautiful facility. They merged in 1997, but not total merger. The subsequent time frame has seen a slow but intentional movement toward each other as over these 17 years different aspects of church life went through mergers (the choir, committees, leadership, and now employees. Most of the employees are paid by the Shared Ministry. The leadership grew frustrated with "no one being in charge" from the pastoral perspective, and so, with planning, they embarked on a process which eventually resulted in a Senior Pastor being called (2010) and then, an Associate Pastor (2011). The Senior Pastoral position was open to a candidate from either tradition (one each provided by the UCC Conference and ELCA Synod). When the congregation chose a UCC pastor, a Lutheran candidate was requested from the ELCA Bishop for the Associate position. The Lutheran Council and UCC Consistory and separate treasuries still exist, but exist to maintain payments to the Shared Ministry and their Benevolence and OCWM responsibilities.
- Community of Faith Church of Houston was organized in 1993 with the expressed purpose of being a dually aligned congregation. Our congregation responded to the intentional ongoing merger conversation between Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ. Community of Faith Church of Houston received congregational standing in the Coastal Plains Area of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the Southwest in the spring 1994 and congregational standing in the Houston Association of the South Central Conference (United Church of Christ) in the fall of 1994.
- COR, founded in 1968, caught the wave of ecumenism in the early 80's around the time of COCU. We thought that through that work all Protestant churches would eventually united and COR wanted to lead the way. The congregation wrote to all mainline denominations and asked who was interested in joining together as a wider church for our affiliation. Five denominations responded and in 1985 - after several years of study, fellowship and negotiation, we became united with them - UCC, UMC, CC (DOC), PC(USA) and the American Baptist Church that recently disassociated with us due to our adoption of inclusion policies.
- In 1939 the church undertook social work jointly with the Presbytery of LA, the Congregational Conference of Southern California and the Southwest. They headquartered this project in the Forsythe Building at 506 N. Evergreen Ave., LA, which was owned by the National Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. On December 7, 1941, beginning of WWII, a great wave of anxiety spread over the people of Japanese ancestry in this country. The project was immediately closed. The building was offered as a temporary shelter for the Japanese people of Terminal Island who were ordered by the Government to evacuate their home in forty-eight hours. By February of 1944 all Japanese ancestry living on the west coast were forced to relocation camps. During the next three years while the Japanese were

in relocation camps, the Little Tokyo area of Los Angeles were ill kept, settled mostly by Blacks who had come from the South. In order to provide for these people, the Congregational Conference and the Presbytery of LA made our church building a community center for the newcomers. During the latter part of 1944, the war situation made the West Coast safe and on January 2, 1945 the Government permitted the Japanese to return to the Pacific Coast states. Rev. Sohei Kowta, who had been working as a leader in the relocation camp in Poston, Arizona, saw an urgent need for work in preparing for the return of the Japanese and returned to Los Angeles. With the help of the Presbytery and American Friends Service Committee, resettled in the Forsythe Building and named it "Evergreen Hostel". The purpose of the hostel was to offer temporary lodging, give assistance in finding employment and permanent housing and to provide personal and spiritual counsel. By the fall of 1945 they asked the Presbytery and the Congregational Conference to appoint Rev. Kowta minister of the Union Church. In the summer of 1946 we asked for help of Presbytery and the Congregational Conference to help us get Union Church building back for worship but it was not until 1949 when the community center relocated and finally regained the church building. In December 1953, the U.S. Government granted the people of Japanese ancestry the right to become citizens and offered many citizenship classes. Then the expansions of the Civic Center encroached upon Union Church building and were forced to move. We had to decide to stay and build within the downtown LA area or go out in the outskirts. The congregation decided to rebuild within this downtown Little Tokyo community. Our current building was dedicated in 1976 and is located at 301 E. 3rd St., LA. Today we have three services. One Japanese speaking service, one English traditional service and our latest Bridge service which is the contemporary service.

- In 1946, after WWII, the two congregations decided to join together as they felt the community was not large enough to sustain both. For the first decade or so they would worship half of the year in one building and the other half in the other building (they are across the street from each other). They already shared a social hall which was equidistant from both. They also shared a single organ for much of that time that was rolled down the street twice a year, moved from one church to the other. It took a while for them to see themselves as one church. They each had their own parsonage with a parking lot separating them. About the time they joined together they started using one of the 2 parsonages (Methodist) as many things: a CE building, a thrift store and 2 apartments. In 2010 the UMC/Troy Conference handed over ownership of the Methodist Church Building, the former Methodist Parsonage and the land they were on to our church. After lead was found in the parsonage, the tenants were asked to leave when their lease was up in 2010 and in 2011, after removing valuable and toxic materials, the Methodist parsonage was burned to the ground by the Arlington Fire Dept., the foundation filled in and grass planted. It now serves as multi-use green space.
- In 1964 the three churches came together as a federated church - bumpy. In 1968 they cancelled that and reorganized as a united church with a specific set of rules in the constitution including not amendable clauses of non-withdrawal language and equal support of all 3 denominations and the rotation of pastors. One church leased to the historic society of the town, eventually another sold in ~2002 and with a land swap built a new parish house in 2009 and parsonage across the street from the smallest of the 3 churches on the impossible to sell location in the middle of the town circle. the parsonage is rented and pays 75% of the pastors salary. the buildings have A/C and gas heat and a modern kitchen. there is no debt. I followed a Methodist minister and a Baptist will follow me. Terms are like any other settled position no statute limitation. Polity rotates because the standing of the minister rotates and with it comes the minister - denomination reviews, pension, IRS 503c3 status etc. They have been doing this for 45 years and have an excellent working model. They joined early see the future and in that step preserved the assets within the community. The pressure to come together was on one hand three very old buildings 1730 - 1836 date range 2 very big for current needs and the two oldest in the biggest and in the rough-

est shape. Second pressure was to bring the communities together. When build originally they were in separate hamlets by then standards far apart, not so in 1960's standards; and the one in the middle also turned out to be the newest and in best condition. Biggest ongoing issue is we now own 2 old organs! Liturgically, we honor most but not all individual denominational events (i.e. we do not have a Baptismal pool as most Baptist churches do but we have the ocean). Many of the Methodist members still come to the rail for communion while bread and cups are passed out to others. We sing favorites from all three hymnals. Theologically they are on the mercy end of the mercy/judgment spectrum and like most congregations have a broad range of people at different places on their faith journeys.

- Our church began in Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1846 through the efforts of Congregationalist missionaries. Therefore when Armenian immigrants came to the U.S. they joined Congregational churches, and were assisted by that denomination in the acquisition of their own church properties. However, they also formed Armenian Evangelical church unions, as they had formerly had in Turkey. Our church was first a part of the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Eastern States, then united with the California Union in 1971 into the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America. In the early 1960s the congregation voted to join the U.C.C., having previously been a part of the Congregational denomination.
- Our DOC branch is rooted back in the 1820's as the Christian revival movement appeared in the area. In the early 1900's, the congregation moved into town and the present congregation is located on the land purchased. The UCC branch traces back to the early 1900's with a Presbyterian and Methodist federation. The Methodist church burned and worshiped at the Presbyterian long enough that they simply joined. In the 1950's both denominations asked that the congregation choose one or the other; the congregation chose to become United Church of Christ. In the 1960's the UCC and DOC congregations were the only churches in town. The youth began meeting together. Over time, Sunday Schools were joined and then one pastor was chosen to oversee both congregations. In the 1980's the congregations found it was more practical to simply have one facility and began worshiping together. At the time there was a movement for Protestant denominations to work closer together, and the two congregations took that seriously. A strategy to merge was worked out, both buildings razed, and a new, more efficient, building constructed. The merger strategy included support of both denominations including representation at wider church functions and dividing mission funds between the two. It was important for the congregation to call themselves a "Community Church" that would cross denominational lines and be open to all who lived in the area, as much as is practical.
- Our Main Street location attests to Trinity Church's long-term presence in the Northborough community. Just yards from the site of both the original 1868 town hall and 1894 library, the church building remains a landmark for passers-by while hosting an array of worship and fellowship opportunities for life in the 21st century. Today's Trinity is the result of a merger in 1948 of Northborough's First Baptist Church and Evangelical Congregational Church, which had been established here in 1827 and 1832, respectively. Our church building is the former Congregational meeting house, and the former Baptist house of worship became the home of the Northborough Historical Society.
- The Margate Community Church was created as a result of American Baptist planting in 1929. The church's first four ministers were ABC (from 1929 - 1974). When the church experienced a decline in the 1970's, the membership looked outside the ABC for leadership and found a Lutheran minister from Philadelphia who was willing to move to Margate. This Lutheran minister served the church for 10 years. During his tenure, the church grew to its largest membership, as his style and preaching skill drew large number of Lutherans, as well as, new members from other denominations. Since we had left the ABC singularity behind and moved into an ecumenical pastoral leadership, our church took on its present ecumenical design and theme. During the leadership of the Lutheran minister, he suggested the church

live up to its Community Church name and they looked at dual alignment with the Lutheran Church. But the polity was wrong. The church eventually moved to align with the UCC since both the ABC and UCC share a similar polity structure. The Margate Community Church joined the UCC in 1976 and has remained dually-aligned ever since. The last two senior ministers have come from Congregational backgrounds and spent more time with the UCC side of the alignment, while also be recognized as ministers-with-standing in the ABC as long as we served MCC. The present day memberships do not think in terms of denominational affiliations, but rather in terms of being a member of MCC. Recent events like Sandy and an increased interest in mission outreach/work, has led us closer to the UCC and their mission programs in New Orleans, Texas, and Birmingham, Alabama, prior to establishing ourselves as a Mission site for churches wishing to come to Atlantic County, NJ and help with the recovery from Super-storm Sandy. Recent years have seen the local Southern New Jersey Baptist Clergy and Church Association become extremely conservative on many issues and this has created some reluctance on the part of the leadership of MCC to participate in their activities. We are slowly growing apart due to this closed-minded approach to current issues.

- The origin of the Congregational/UCC Church goes back to 1792. The Methodist Episcopal/United Methodist Church building dated to 1875 though the origins there go back a decade or more. Federation occurred in 1930 as a result of the depression. The two church buildings and two parsonages were kept until 1947, when it was decided to keep the Congregational building and parsonage and a Sunday school building owned by the Methodists (since sold off as has been the parsonage). There was an agreement to alternate pastors between the two denominations. The two denominations met separately for annual meetings and then as the United Church (1930 name) and kept separate missionary and benevolence budgets. The last two pastors have been UCC, one from about 1998 to 2001 and the second from 2001 as quarter time to present (the second longest serving pastor since the original Congregational pastor who began in 1806). In this recent time of two UCC pastors, to my knowledge the we have only had an actual relationship with the larger UCC denomination. The Methodist members have declined to a small minority. The church pays the Methodist denomination the same per capita as we do to the UCC; though the Methodists request a sum three or four times what they receive from us. Having the affiliation with both churches does seem to attract visitors; we reside in a tourist destination village.
- The Peoples Church is a multi-denominational church, officially recognized and affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, the American Baptist Church, and the United Church of Christ. Prior to the founding of The Peoples Church in 1907, there were no Protestant churches in East Lansing, the home of Michigan State University. Four professors from the university decided to remedy the situation by establishing a Protestant congregation. Unfortunately, the four men could not agree on one denomination by which they would align themselves. Instead, they proposed an experimental congregation that would be equally part of each denominational tradition. The congregation has maintained this unique status within each denomination and as the senior pastor, I am considered a minister member of each denomination. The three associate pastors come from different denominations, as required by our unique local polity.
- The two congregations, Upton United Methodist Church and the First Congregational Church of Upton, were only two "mainline" Protestant churches in this small New England town and located across the town common from one another. It was natural to share ministries, ministers and people. As I understand it, they started cooperating on events, services and programs and talking about federating in late 1960s. The talks took a while but the sticking point was which building to keep. The UCC minister at the time told me that they were stuck "till God saw fit to smite the Methodist boiler" and then the decision was made and the congregations moved in together in the First Congregational building, becoming the United Par-

ish. We are still officially “two churches that share one ministry” - keeping our membership lists distinct - but in all other ways we are one congregation. The only way that we operate as two congregations is in appointing denominational delegates and in annual contributions to both conferences. Otherwise there is no distinction made by anyone. Our by-laws (created at the time of the federation) are (in my opinion) quite “congregational” in polity. The only other nod toward our dual affiliation is that pastors alternate between the two denominations. Current pastor is UCC. Previous was UMC and successor will be UMC.

- The winter of 1995-1996 was an especially stormy one, with a historic blizzard in January. The snow accumulation and ice kept the congregation of Norristown Schwenkfelder Church from accessing its building for worship. An invitation went out from Olivet United Church of Christ, offering the use of its facilities during the storm. From those earliest days of cooperation, the two congregations recognized their similar needs and goals. Throughout 1996, both congregations held meetings and retreats focused on future sustainability and growth. Following months of study, prayer, and reflection, both Norristown Schwenkfelder and Olivet UCC voted on merging. Both congregations voted overwhelmingly in support of becoming one church. Olivet-Schwenkfelder United Church of Christ was born, blending and celebrating the rich heritage of both traditions. The Schwenkfelders sold their church building, and moved into the Olivet building. The UCC members welcomed Norristown Schwenkfelder pastor, Rev. Gene F. Jerge, as their new minister. On May 18, 1997 - Pentecost Sunday - the new congregation officially gathered as one. All members of the church are consider both UCC and Schwenkfelder.



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