

Fourth Presbyterian Church Long-Range Planning Task Force

Town Hall Report

November 5 and 12, 2023



Objectives

To share...

how we got here

To prepare you...

to participate in the future listening sessions

Background

LRP Task Force appointed by Shannon Kershner and launched January 2023

Lay Leaders		Pastor Support	Staff Support
Janet Love	Diane Meister	Nancy Benson-Nicol	Jana Blazek
Theresa Mintle	Anne Voshel	Lucy Forster-Smith	
Eric Wu, Co-chair	Allison Youngblood, Co-chair		
Betsy Zeiger			

OUR CHARGE:

Identify what God is calling us to do and to be in this transition by...

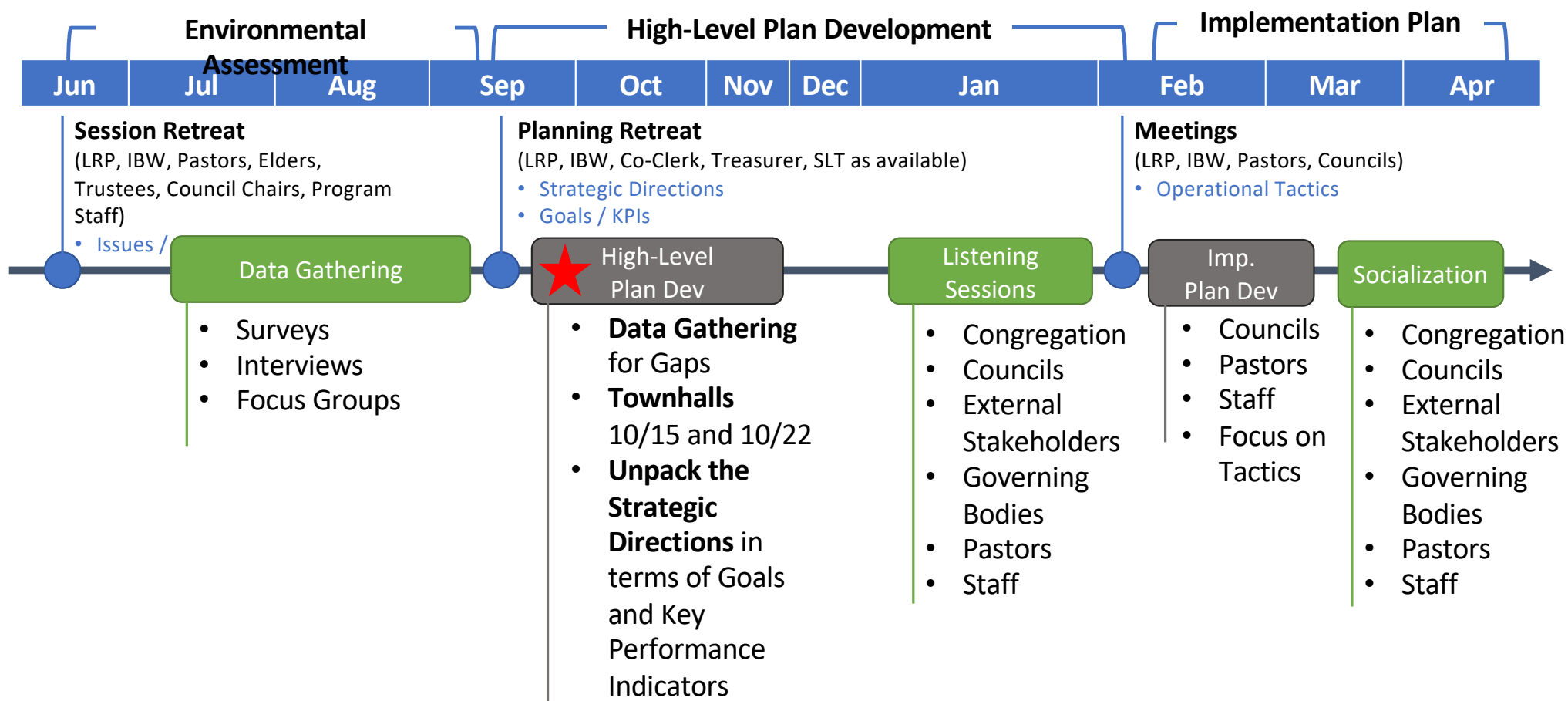
listening to voices of Fourth Presbyterian Church members, non-member attendees, Pastors, and Staff
to understand our current environment and
to plan a path forward for the next 3 – 5 years



Strategic Planning: Structure & Focus



Long-Range Planning Task Force Timeline



Environmental Assessment: Sources / Voices



Session Retreat

Congregation Interviews

27 voices

- Representative Voices [6]
- Donors: [6]
- Opted Out/Low(er) Engagement [9]
- Focus Group: Representative Voices [6]

Staff Interviews

22 voices

- Church Staff (Programs, Admin/Operations) [14]
- Program Managers/ Directors (Center for Life & Learning, Day School, Replogle Center, Chicago Lights) [8]

Pastor Interviews

6 voices

- 4th Pres Interviews [6]

External Interviews

3 voices

- Peer/Innovative Churches: [3]

Congregation Survey

649 responses analyzed

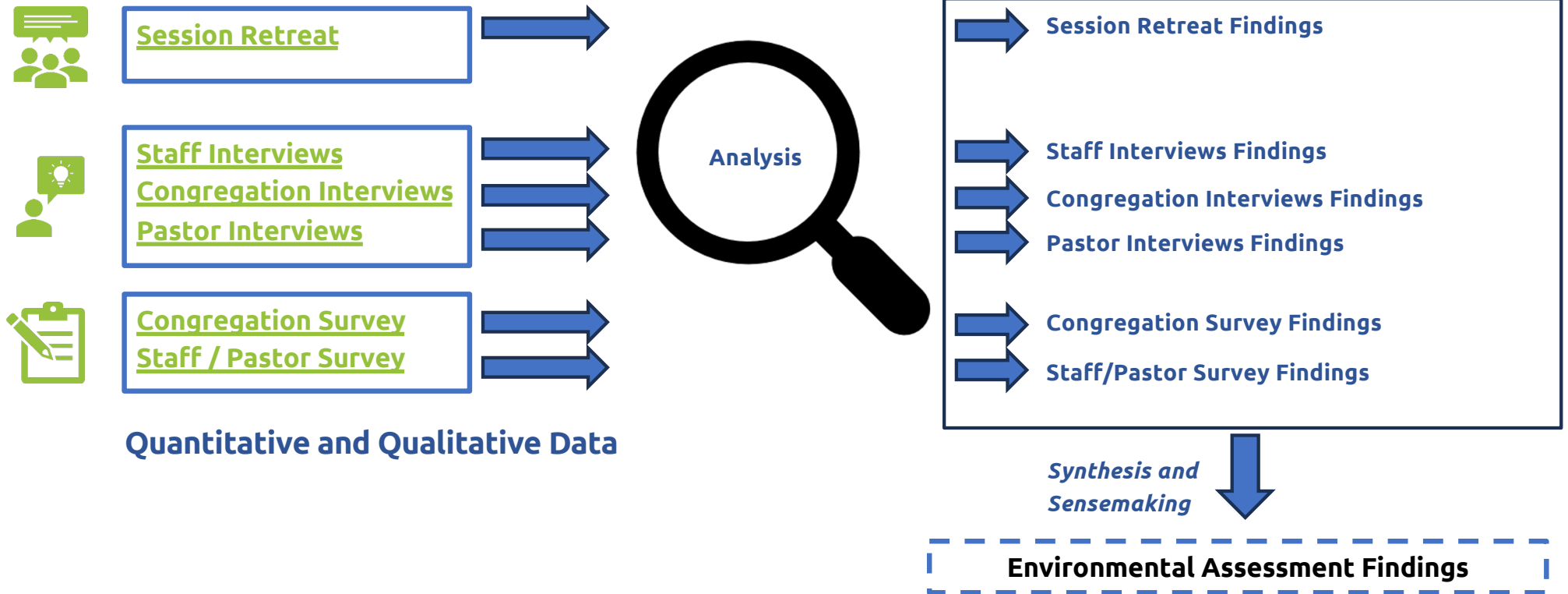
- 569 completed the entire survey
 - 22 completed 45% to 99% of survey
 - 58 completed 1% to 44% of survey
- 137 open-ended comments shared

Staff / Pastor Survey

54 respondents

- Fourth Church manager/supervisor=18
- Fourth Church program, administrative, operational staff=23
- Pastoral Staff=4
- Chicago Lights manager/supervisor, staff=9

How we used the data



Gaps in our data



Young adults/ young families

- Additional interviews
- Targeted approach for the listening sessions in January



Unchurched/ the “Nones”










- Additional interviews
- Outside research



Impact of the Member Census

- Seeking opportunities to focus and collaborate
- Considering impact to church sustainability

Environmental Assessment: Findings

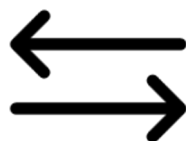
-  Serving the congregation of today; creating the congregation of the future
-  Building a sense of belonging/engagement
-  Putting “church” into the plan
-  Racial equity, anti-racism, LGBTQIA inclusion
-  Programs and Outreach
-  External communications
-  Fourth Church voice / presence locally, nationally
-  Financial stability
-  Organizational structure

Serving the congregation of today; creating the future

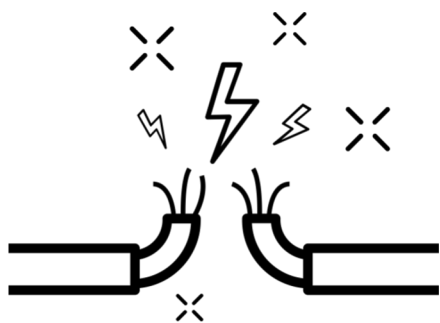


Transformation is a theme

Understand how our **faith is grounded by and transformed** our by an authentic relationship with the triune God



Root this plan in our **commitment to being a transformational witness for God in the world**



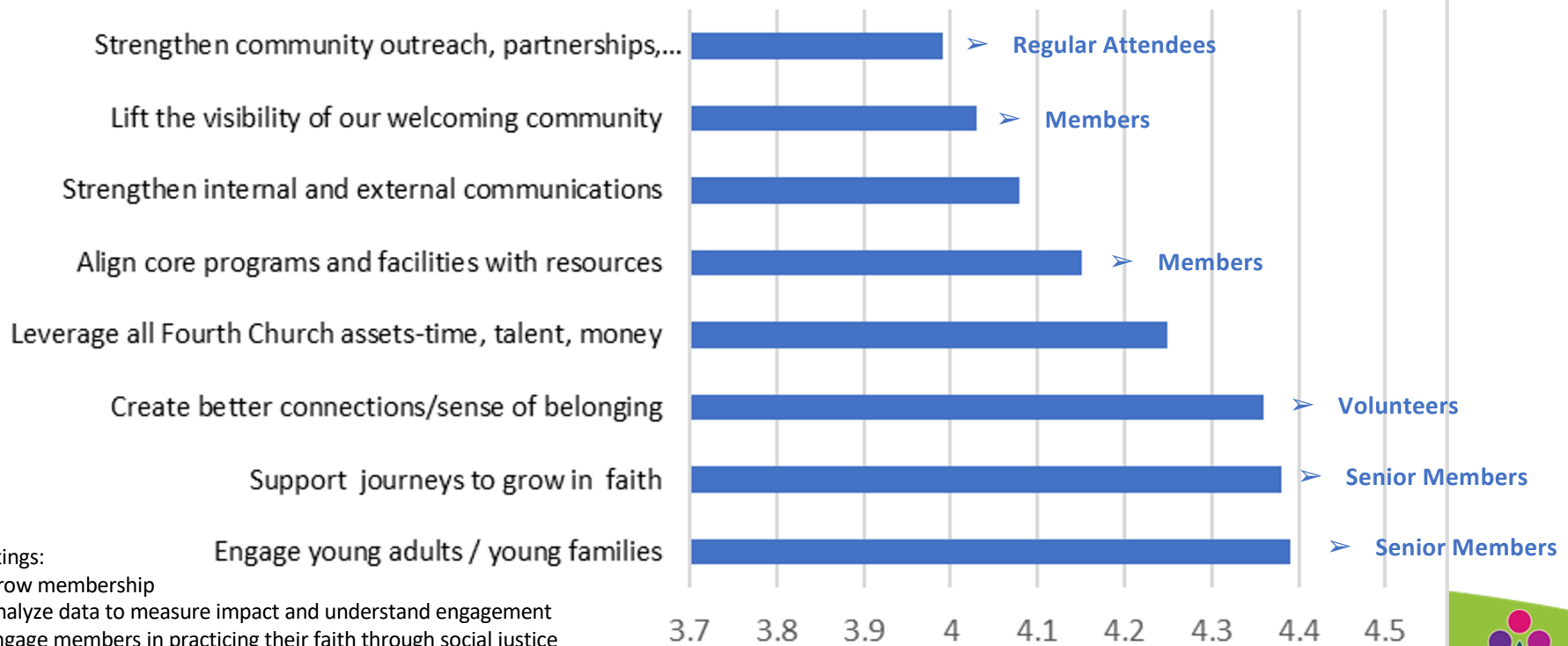
Tensions are apparent between older, long-time members—who currently make up a majority of the church census—and younger, newer members

- Worship experience
- Type of programs/experiences they want to engage in,
- Social justice role and voice of the church

Serving the congregation of today; creating the future



Topics for the Long-Range Plan



Lower ratings:

- Grow membership
- Analyze data to measure impact and understand engagement
- Engage members in practicing their faith through social justice
- Increase Fourth Church's visibility/voice

Building a sense of belonging / engagement



The majority opinion is that the church is **moderately effective** at **creating a sense of belonging** within the congregation



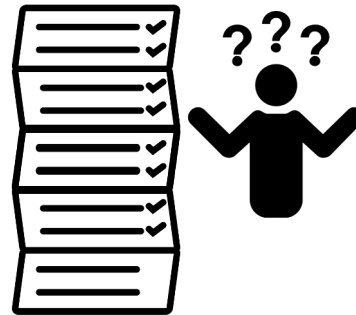
How to make a large church feel “small”?



How might we create and embed a culture of invitation



.....and **moderately effective** at **engaging new members**

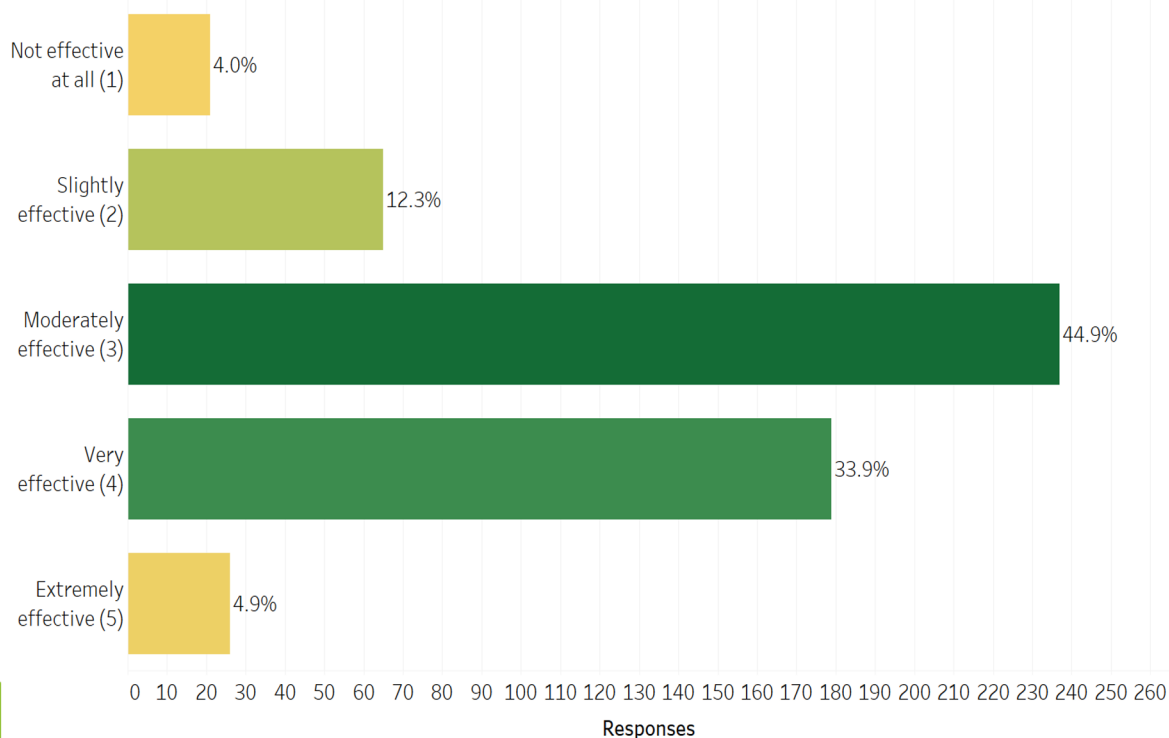


The amount and breadth of activities at Fourth are hard to find even for the engaged.

Building a sense of belonging / engagement



How effective do you believe Fourth Church is in creating a **sense of belonging** within the congregation?



Average Score 3.23/5

Most common response: Moderately effective (44.9%)

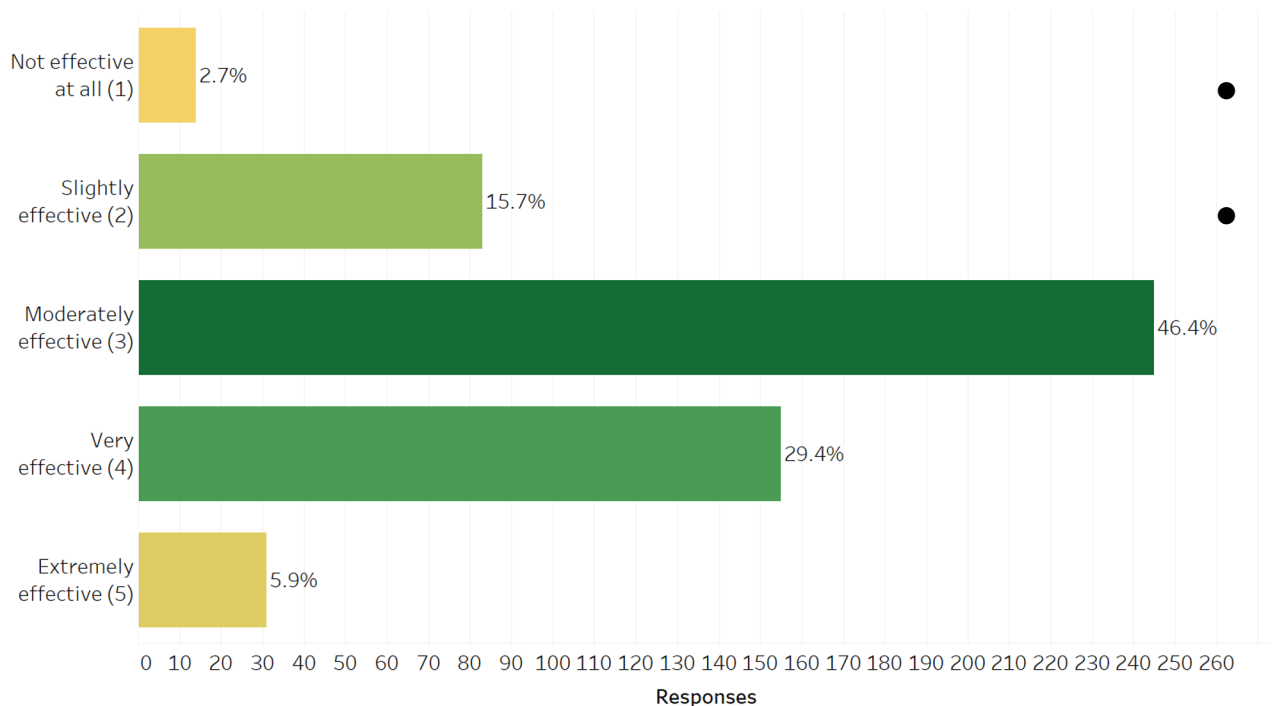
- **Non-members: 5.2% higher** than members (3.38 v. 3.21)
- **Regular worship attendees: 7.3% higher** than occasional attendees
- **Those who participate and volunteer: limited variance**
- **Length of engagement: limited variance**
- **People of Color: Similar across groups** but slightly lower for those who did not want to specify their racial/ethnic group
- **LGBTQIA+: 7.4% higher** than non-LGBTQIA+ scores



Building a sense of belonging / engagement



How effective do you believe Fourth Church is in **welcoming and engaging** new members?



- Fourth Church is moderately effective (3.2/5) at welcoming and engaging new members
- Non-members rated welcoming and engaging new members slightly higher than members
- Regular attendees rated welcoming and engaging new members slightly higher than occasional attendees
- Respondents identifying as LGBTQIA+ scores were 7.5% higher than non-LGBTQIA+

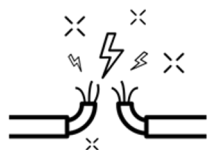
Putting “church” into the plan

Worship

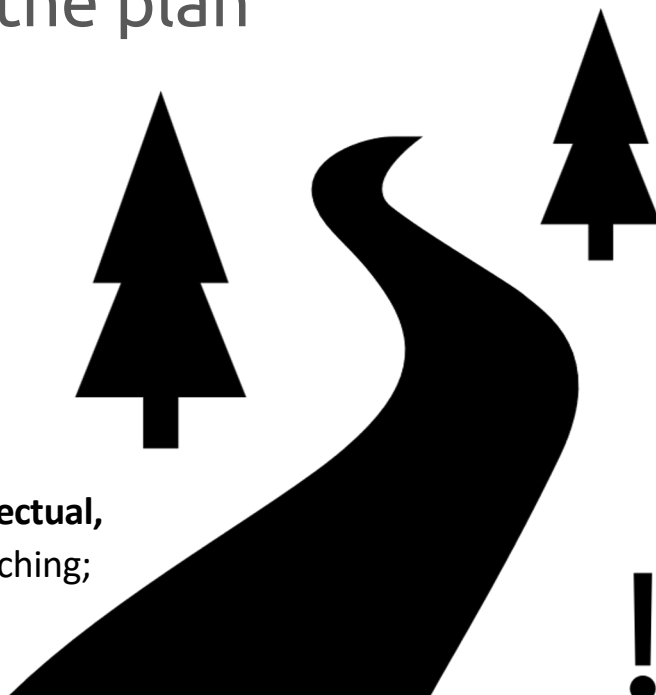
People value the worship experience with **traditional liturgy and rich music**; some interest in more contemporary services



People like a **thoughtful, intellectual, and inspiring approach** to preaching; Church does not need to be dumbed down



There is a **disconnect when pastors preach on hard topics and/or politics**. Some like that it is tied to scripture and some prefer not to hear about politics from the pulpit



Spiritual Journey

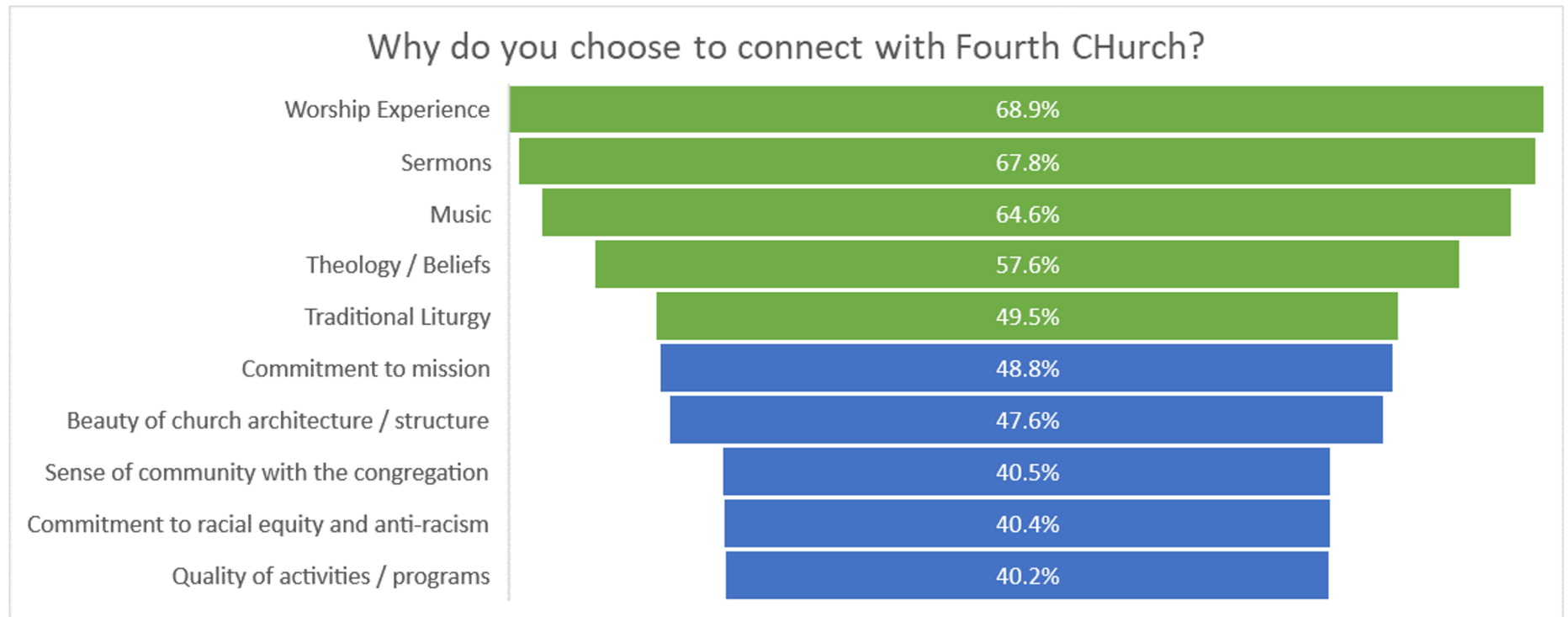
Faith Formation

Different demographic groups have **different approaches to what faith formation looks like**.

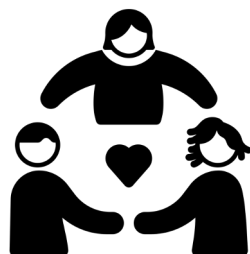


! Interest in a **shared vision** about what it looks like to grow, form our faith at Fourth Church

Putting “church” into the plan

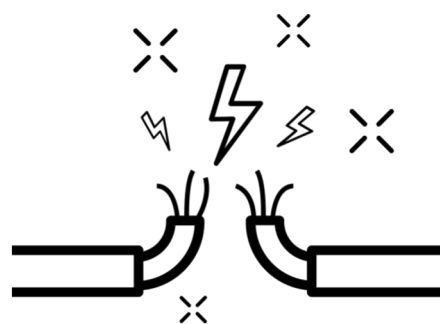


Racial equity, anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ inclusion



There was a **strong majority opinion** that racial equity and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the church was important for people personally and.....

There was a **strong majority opinion** that racial equity and the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the church are fundamental to Fourth Presbyterian's mission.....



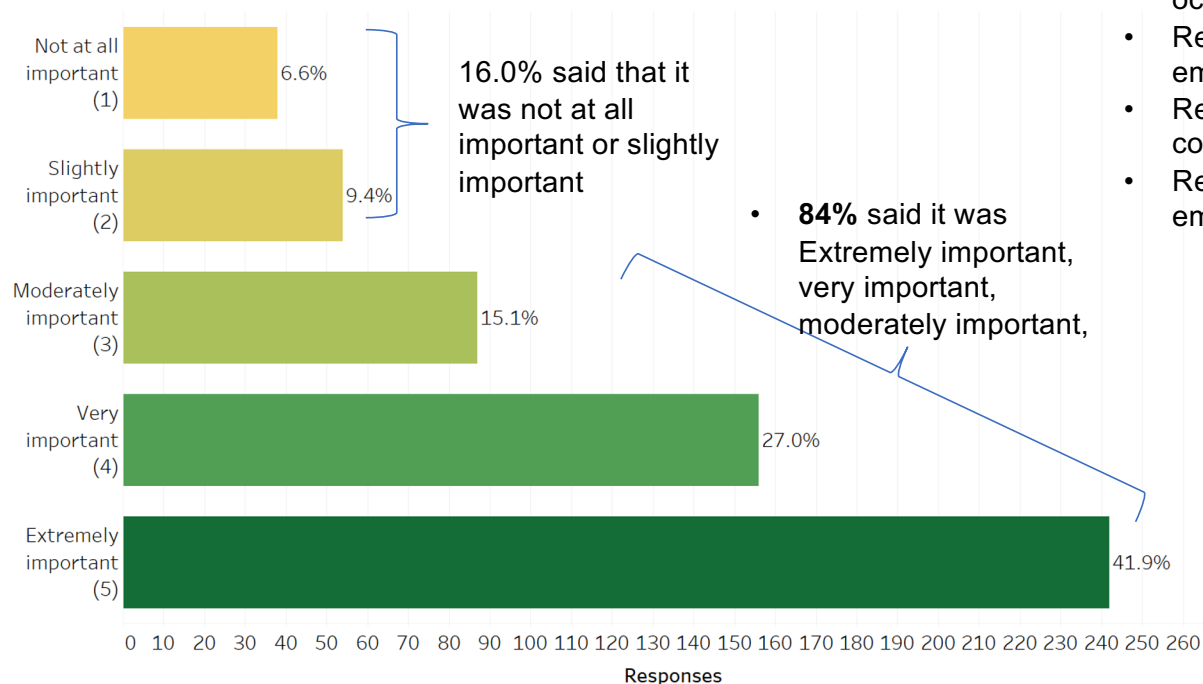
However, there was a **Disconnect** in views about **how** this work is being advanced in the church, particularly around anti-racism



Racial equity, anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ inclusion



Fourth Church is committed to promoting racial equity, anti-racism, and the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals in church and society. How important is the fulfillment of these commitments to you?



Overall, there is a strong majority belief that racial equity and LGBTQIA+ inclusion is important for them personally

- Total Average score: 3.88 / 5
- Members and non-members agreed on the importance of these commitments
- Regular Attendees thought this was more important than occasional or non attendees
- Respondents who were newer to the church put more emphasis on these commitments than long-time members
- Respondents who identify as BIPOC put more emphasis on commitments
- Respondents who identify as LGBTQIA+ put more emphasis on commitments

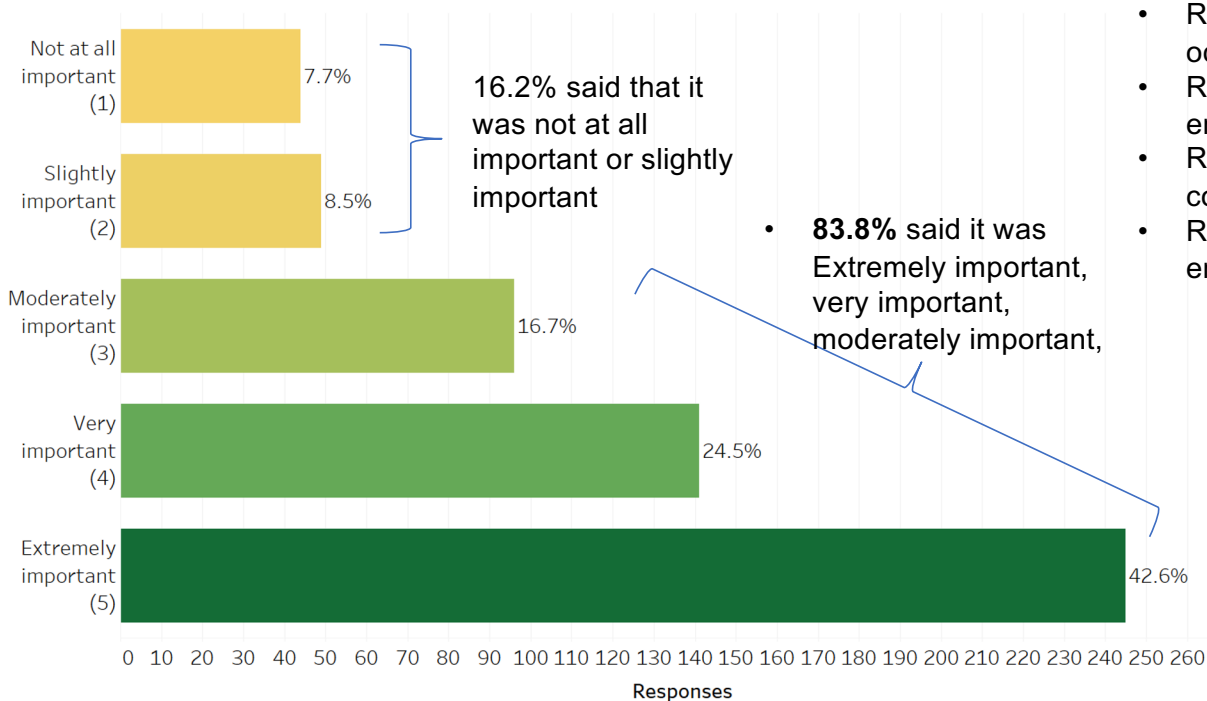
Racial equity, anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ inclusion



Fourth Church is committed to promoting racial equity, anti-racism, and the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals in church and society. How important is the fulfillment of these commitments to Fourth Church to fulfill its mission?

Overall, there is a strong majority belief that racial equity and LGBTQIA+ inclusion is fundamental to Fourth Presbyterian Church Mission

- Total Average score: 3.86 / 5
- Members and non-members agreed on the importance of these commitments
- Regular Attendees thought this was more important than occasional or non attendees
- Respondents who were newer to the church put more emphasis on these commitments than long-time members
- Respondents who identify as BIPOC put more emphasis on commitments
- Respondents who identify as LGBTQIA+ put more emphasis on commitments



Programs and Outreach



General consensus that programs are strong



Focus

- Do we have the right programs?
- Are our programs too broad?



Outcomes

- Are they delivering outcomes the **people involved need**?
- Are they delivering outcomes the **church wants to achieve**?



Affiliate Programs

- Chicago Lights
- Day School
- Lorene Replogle Counseling Center

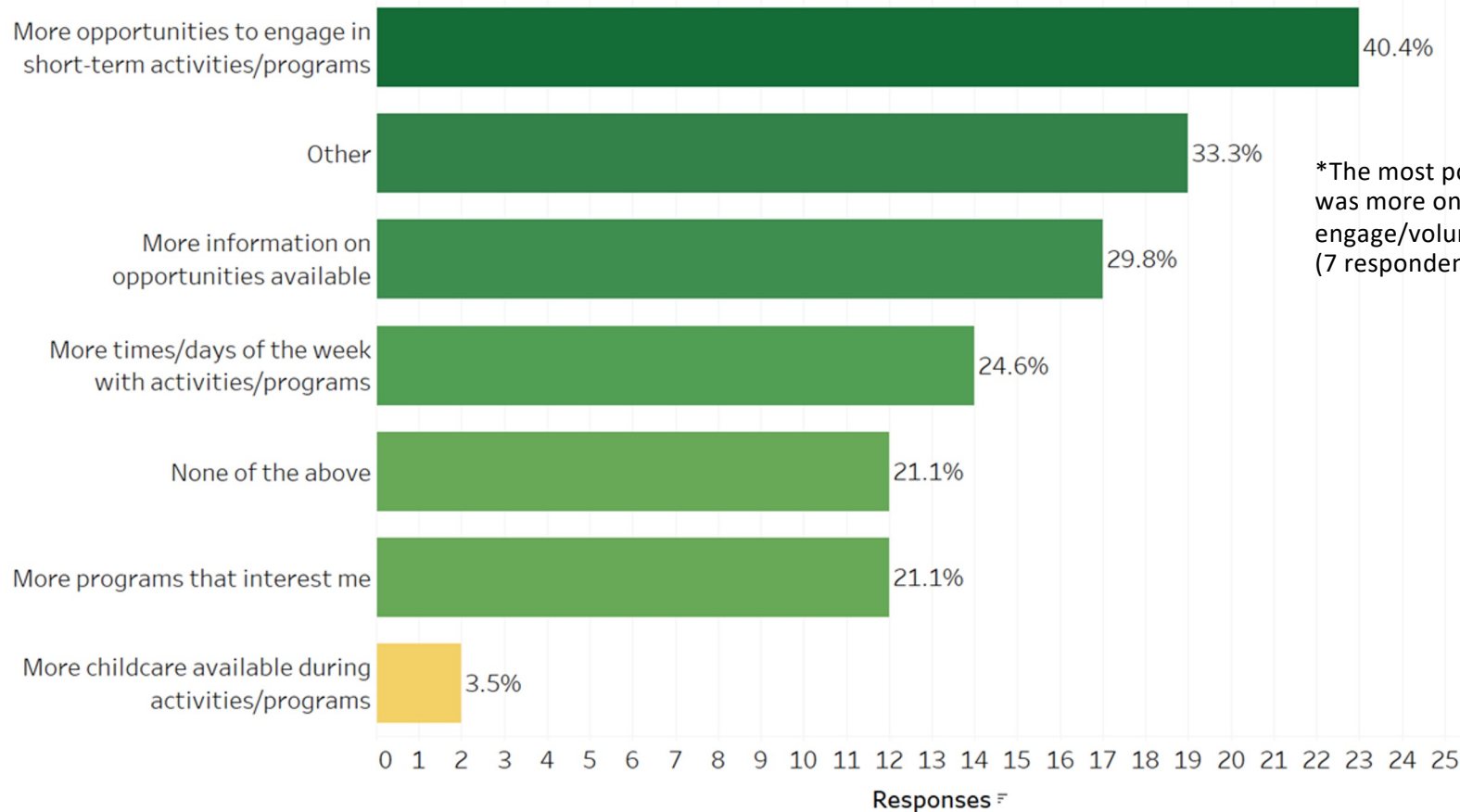
Programs and Outreach



Programs and Outreach



What changes that would encourage you to engage more (select all that apply)



*The most popular "Other" response was more online opportunities to engage/volunteer from a distance (7 respondents)



External Communications



The environmental assessment reveals a widely held belief the church needs to do a better job of storytelling and is missing opportunities to connect more personally with members and to market itself to potential new members.



Beyond publicity, there appears to be no defined marketing strategy for the church.

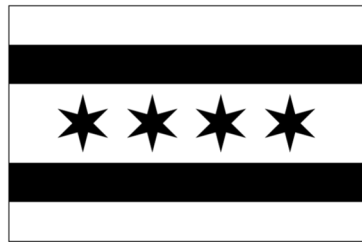


External communications tend to be publicity-oriented and print-focused. There is concern the church is not leveraging social and digital media platforms effectively, including improving the website which is widely seen as confusing and difficult to navigate.



It was noted that for a church of its size, the Fourth Church communications department is likely under-resourced.

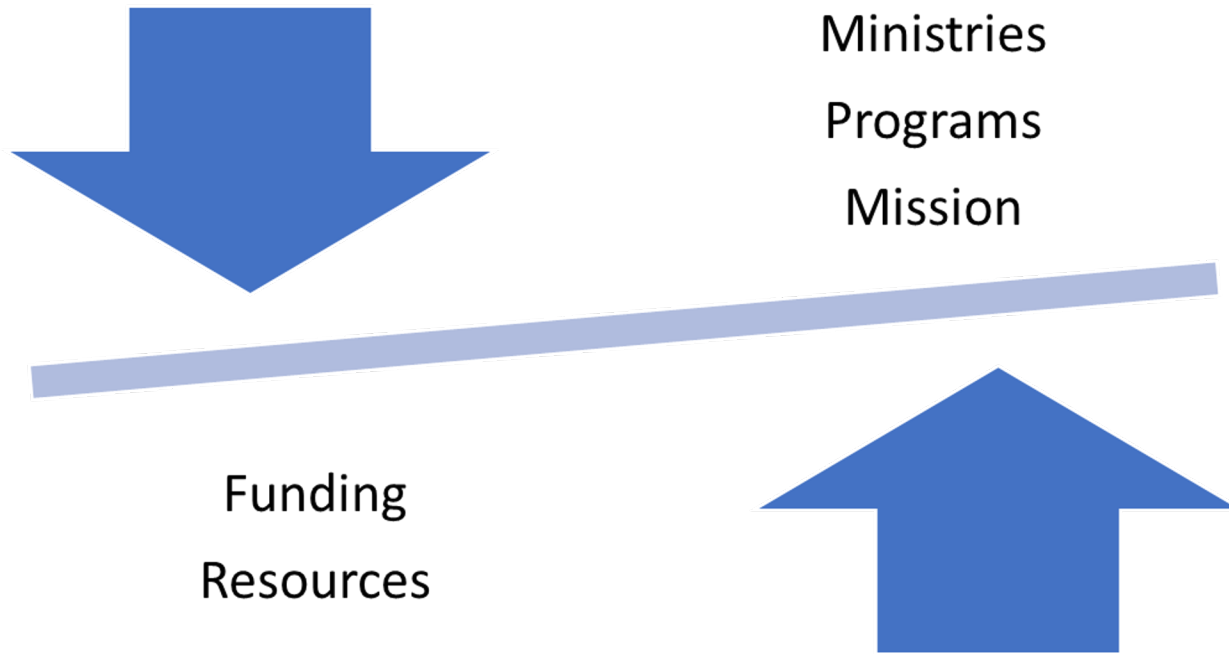
Fourth Church voice / presence locally, nationally



It will be vital for Fourth Church to be clear about the “why” of its advocacy efforts, not just the “how.”.

There is **mixed desire** for FPC to have a clearer, “louder” voice and presence in Chicago and nationally related to community and social issues.

Financial stability

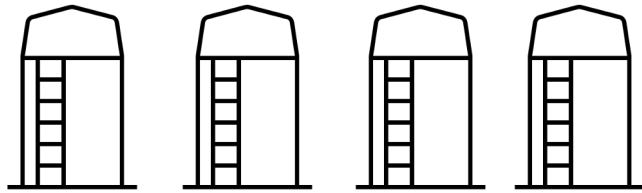


Funding
Resources

Ministries
Programs
Mission

Organizational structure & Culture

Fourth Church is a large and complex operation. The staff interviews and survey revealed many staff feel the church is home to a group of disconnected organizations that do not have a shared sense of mission and accountability.



Organizational Silos



Decision-making in the church is complex, hierarchical, and opaque to many. Staff survey organizational culture questions revealed differences in opinion on decision making.

Collaboration among programs, ministries, and people tends to be episodic, not the norm. Staff and leadership expressed a desire for an organizational structure that encourages active identification of natural points of collaboration.



DRAFT Strategic Directions



Building Connections/Sense of Belonging in the Congregation

Concepts: Culture of invitation; efforts aligned/interconnected across ministries/programs; personal invitation/radical hospitality; racial equity, anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ inclusion; communications



Support/Strengthen Faith/Christian Formation

Concepts: Supporting faith/spiritual journeys of people who belong to/attend Fourth Church; integrated explicitly as foundation of all church programs/efforts; honoring and enriching the worship experience; communications



Mission Outreach, Community Engagement, & Partnerships

Concepts: Mission/Social Justice outreach, Mission focused, clear intentions, defined KPIs, grounded in understanding of community needs, advocacy, volunteer experience, communications



Church Sustainability

Concepts: Developing and supporting the peoples, systems and structures to ensure financial and operational excellence/success; security and building access; communications

Next Steps

Long-Range Planning Task Force

Report Out and Feedback

Plan Development

- High-level Plan Development: identify Goals and KPI's (using feedback from leadership and Townhalls)
- Listening Sessions with internal and external stakeholders
- Prepare draft plan with tactics

Plan Implementation

- Finalization and socialization

What can you do?

**Join a
Listening Session
in January**

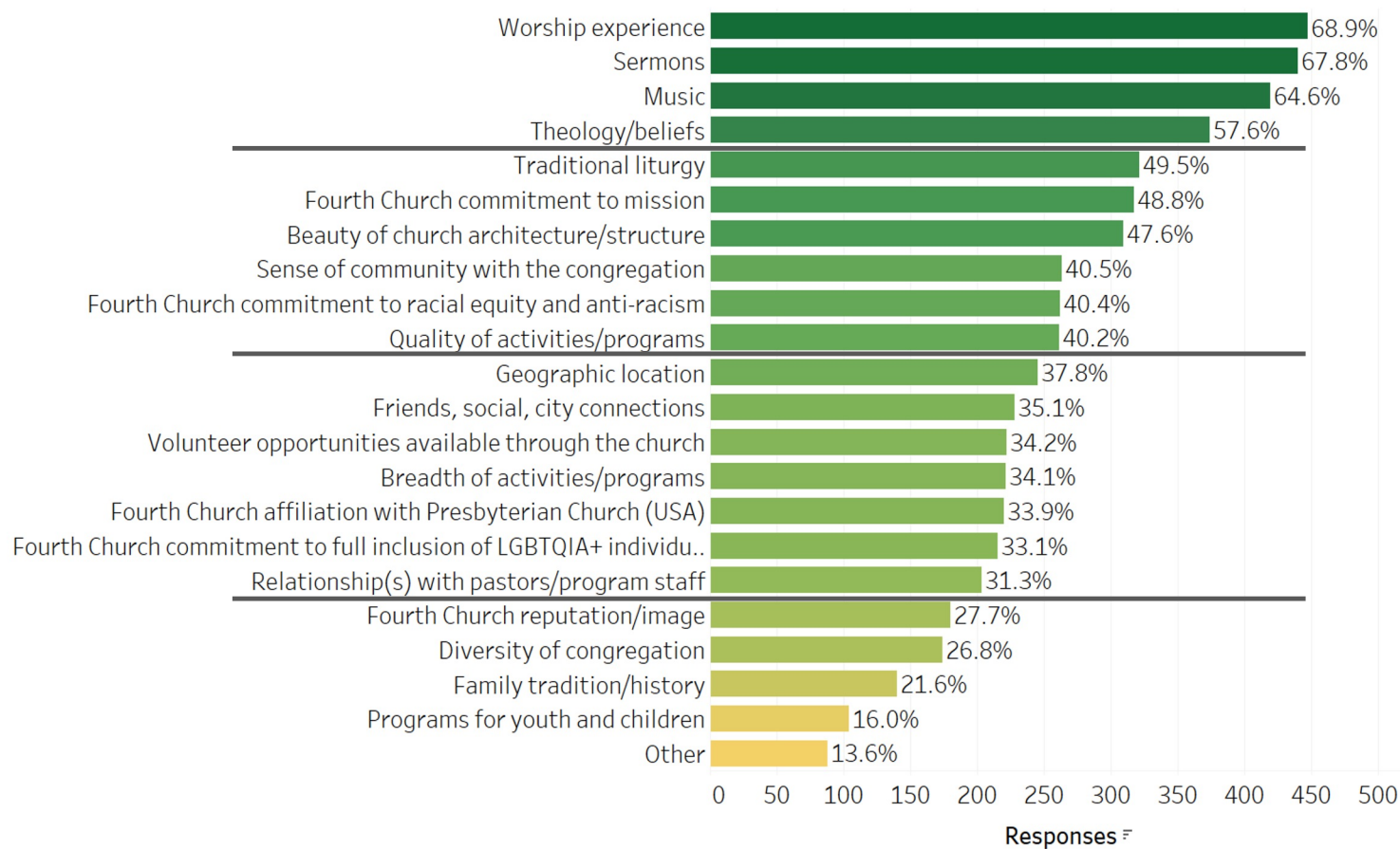




Q&A

longrange@fourthchurch.org

Why do you choose to connect with Fourth Church?

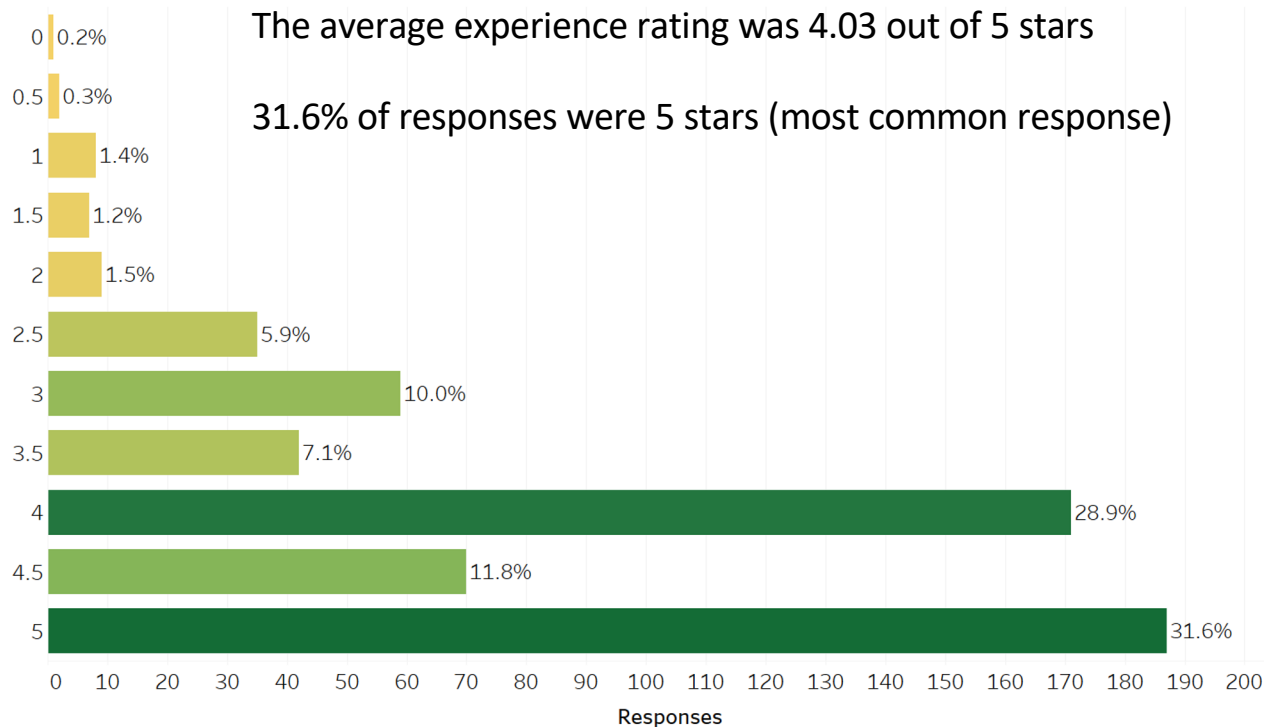


Mentioned by > 50% of respondents

- Worship experience,
- sermons,
- music, and
- theology/beliefs



How would you describe your **experience** with Fourth Church?



- **Non-members: slightly higher** experience rating (4.12) than members (4.02)
- **Regular worship attendees: nearly 1 full point higher** than those who don't attend worship services
- **Those who participate and volunteer: rate their experiences higher**
- **Length of engagement: similar** except
 - 1 year or less (higher ratings)
 - 2 to 5 years (lower ratings)
- **People of Color: High experience ratings** (4.20 / 5)
- **LGBTQIA+: Much higher experience ratings** (4.44/5)