

RESULTS OF THE 2018-19 CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY

by Michelle Naples, 2018-19 Congregation President

In the fall of 2018, the Board of Trustees conducted an inaugural congregational survey to provide a reference point and ground our ongoing practice of measuring progress on our Ends. We received 159 responses, representing about one-fifth of our membership.

The primary focus of the survey was to evaluate how well the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee currently reflects each End, as well as how important each is to our mission. As such, we asked respondents to score both aspects of each End along with a scale from -2 (highly disagree) to 2 (highly agree), with 0 being neutral.

Listed below are the average scores per End statement for both the rating of how true each End is today (SUCCESS) and how important (IMPORTANCE) each is to our mission.

Average scores per End

For more information go to uumilwaukee.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Survey-Results-18-19-Ends.pdf.

(Interpretation Note: For example, a score of .5 means that the average score falls halfway between “Neutral” and “Agree”).

1. Value, develop, and celebrate the gifts that come from authentic connection across difference, emphasizing racial, ethnic, and generational difference.
SUCCESS **.69** - IMPORTANCE **.94**
2. Recognize power differences and challenge injustice where it arises.
SUCCESS **.85** - IMPORTANCE **1.06**
3. Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice.
SUCCESS **.46** - IMPORTANCE **.92**
4. Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge.
SUCCESS **1.07** - IMPORTANCE **1.17**
5. Promote Unitarian Universalism and our shared values in the world.
SUCCESS **.84** - IMPORTANCE **.82**
6. Open ourselves to wonder, making ourselves vulnerable and available to find meaning, inspiration, and transformation.
SUCCESS **.84** - IMPORTANCE **.89**

7. Create communal experiences celebrating our interconnectedness.
SUCCESS **.81** - IMPORTANCE **1.01**
8. Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us.
SUCCESS **.50** - IMPORTANCE **1.30**

Observations

Overall, the results are modestly positive, with average scores almost entirely falling between 0 (Neutral) and 1 (Agree).

Results reflect that we believe we are most successful at End 4 and least successful at Ends 3 and 8, although even Ends 3 and 8 are above neutral. In terms of importance, we rated Ends 4 and 8 as most important, and Ends 5 and 6 as least important, but still more important than not with average scores above neutral.

End 8 shows the widest gap between how important it is compared to how successful we think we are. End 5 shows the smallest difference between how important it is compared to how successful we think we are.

What do the Ends really mean?

Now that we have the Ends, it is time to move towards realizing them! This is the work of the shared ministry of the church, led by our ministers, staff, staff-led teams, and member-led ministries. The ministers and staff have worked to interpret what it will look like to realize these Ends through the ministries of the church. If you want to read more about what will become true through our shared ministry to make these Ends real, see the Interpretations of the Ends at <https://uumilwaukee.org/ends-interpretations>.

Conclusion

The congregational survey provides valuable baseline information to guide our efforts and evaluate our progress over time. The relative closeness of the scores suggests that all Ends deserve attention. While all the scores were above neutral, it is clear we have a lot of work to do to fully live into our Ends and our vision for the future.

We encourage a higher level of participation in the survey next year (Spring 2020), especially among our youth who were under-represented (no one under age 25 completed the survey). The more people providing feedback on our direction and progress, the better we can evaluate the work being done and the impact our community is having on each other and on the wider community.