



## First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Highlights from the 2020 Congregational Survey

by Jane Cliff, Board of Trustees  
March 2021

Thank you to all who participated in First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee's 2020 congregational survey! Your responses help the Board of Trustees and staff measure progress towards meeting our Ends statements (or goals) that guide our congregational commitments and actions, and also help identify areas that may need additional time and resources. As you read the highlights below, please keep in mind that any conclusions are limited to those who answered the survey; thus, the survey may not fully represent the entire congregation.

Please also see the complete survey results, with easy-to-read [visual charts and data here](#).

### INSIGHTS

- 1) About **22% of members answered the survey in 2020** (163 vs. 159 in 2018). In 2020 we had significantly more respondents who have been members for 20+ years (60 in 2020 vs. 34 in 2018), and a correspondingly larger number of respondents were older than those who responded in 2018.
- 2) Over 26% of respondents said they are **very or extremely familiar with First Church Ends**. Roughly 32% of respondents were not at all familiar with the Ends, while 41% were somewhat familiar with them.
- 3) The congregation has seen **significant progress made on all of our Ends** since 2018, and the gaps between importance and congregants' assessment of how true each is today have decreased, indicating that we are making progress.
- 4) In both 2018 and 2020, the respondents think **we do the best at End 4 "generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge."** End 4 was viewed as the most important goal in 2020, while it ranked second in 2018.
- 5) In 2020, respondents think **we need to improve the most in implementing End 8 "Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us."** End 8 was seen as the second most important goal in 2020, while it ranked first in 2018.
- 6) In 2020, the **difference between how well we do in living our Ends vs. how important we think they are is largest for End 8**, followed by End 3, "Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice."
- 7) In terms of importance, the congregation **ranked the Ends similarly in both years**. However,

almost all of the Ends are now perceived as more important in 2020 than they were in 2018.

- 8) In 2020, **attendance numbers are at the extremes**. When asked how often they attend services, more members responded “Rarely” or “Always,” and fewer responded with the options in between.
- 9) People are more **likely to talk about First Church than invite someone they know**. This may be cultural, but how could we find a UU way to do this? Responses to questions about talking to non-members and welcoming different people followed a bell curve.
- 10) We’ve **dropped overall on the Net Promoter Score (a.k.a. NPS, which indicates how likely one is to recommend something, with 10 as most likely)**. We don’t have more people ranking us poorly, but fewer people rank us a 10. However, we do have about the same number of people ranking us 8-10 as in 2018. This may be due to the switch from in-person to online services in March 2020 and people not as able/inclined to engage with church activities. Or it could be due to the group of people now attending services rarely. Other possible explanations include online, COVID-19, or political fatigue, or online just doesn’t connect with people the same way as in-person services and activities do.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

All look similar to 2018 with the following exceptions:

- 1) In 2020 more respondents identified as **straight/heterosexual** (85% of respondents to this question in 2020, vs. 80% in 2018).
- 2) A significant jump in the number of respondents **above the age of 66** (59% of respondents to this question in 2020 vs. 41% in 2018).
- 3) **Fewer families with children of all ages** (33% of 2020 respondents to this question vs. 40% in 2018). One factor may be that families were too busy to complete the survey with kids at home due to the pandemic.
- 4) 20 fewer respondents identified as **people of color** (only 3% of respondents to this question in 2020 vs. 17% in 2018) and 20 more identified as not people of color (97% in 2020 vs. 83% in 2018).
- 5) In 2020, more people **identified hearing** (33% vs. 27% in 2018) and thinking difficulties (20% vs. 13% in 2018); could be related to a greater number of older respondents.
- 6) The curve of **household income** looks similar to 2018, but we have more detail now that we’ve asked the question with actual numbers instead of categories. Per strategic planning consultant John Wimberly’s report, Milwaukee’s median household income is \$66K/year. 57% of people who answered this question in 2020 reported incomes higher than \$75K/year.

- 7) In both 2018 and 2020, roughly 33% of respondents identify as **male and 67% identify as female and 100% identify as Cis rather than Trans.**

## ENDS BY DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1) For all demographic categories monitored (people of color; LGBTQ; people with a disability; older than 66 years; households with kids; attended less 3 years; attended more than 10 years; BOT or Executive Team member), the 2020 NPS numbers (net promoter score, which means how likely one is to recommend something) are **lower than those in 2018.**
- 2) BOT and Executive Team members had the highest overall NPS across all ends in both years, while LGBTQ respondents had the lowest NPS overall both years.
- 3) The **biggest change in NPS rankings was in the people of color** demographic (third highest in 2018 vs. eighth highest in 2020).
- 4) Comparisons between the overall **NPS number is inconclusive for income levels**, due the different way we asked the question in the two survey periods.
- 5) In 2018 all, and in 2020 a majority of demographic categories, **thought that End 8 (creating accessible, courageous and innovative welcome) has the largest gap** between how well we're doing and the End's importance—while we've seen some change, we still need to improve here.
- 6) In **2020 LGBTQ respondents**, people who have attended less than three years, and BOT members identify End 3 (follow leadership of those most affected by injustice) as having the largest gap between our current performance and the End's importance. This was not the case for any group in 2018.
- 7) In 2020, all demographic groups except for LGBTQ respondents think that **First Church does the best in meeting End 4**, generously giving and receiving support. In 2018, all groups except people of color and people with disabilities agreed with this finding.

For more details on the 2018 and 2020 congregational surveys, contact Board members Ben LeFort, Rollie Hanson, or Jane Cliff.