

Cranford United Methodist Church Roadmap to Renewal



“Roadmap to Renewal” Research Outcomes

December 4, 2011

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In 2011, Cranford United Methodist Church celebrated its 150th anniversary. In discussion and prayer with congregational members and the Church at large, it was believed that this is an opportune time in the church's life to rediscover ministry and mission in exciting ways and discern the vision to which God has called us.

This process, identified as the "Roadmap to Renewal," includes a research effort among congregation and community members, as well as a prayer initiative to call on God's guidance throughout the process. The *Roadmap to Renewal* book by Douglas W. Ruffle is being used as a supporting tool to guide the teams engaged in this process and provide perspectives and insights from others who have experienced a similar transformational undertaking.

The outcome of this process enables the church to realign mission, goals and objectives for future growth. It will also equip the Church at large to understand the needs of this church and discern, with God's guidance, the most appropriate pastor and other leaders to propel the church forward.



Background

Research Objectives and Methodology

Research Findings

- Understanding Our Community
- Community Perspectives

- Understanding Our Congregation
- Congregation Perspectives
- Congregation Commentary



- To assess the available demographic, psychographic, and behavioral attributes of the current congregation (members and non-members), as well as the surrounding community
- To create methods of receiving quantitative and qualitative research data from the congregation and from leaders and members of our community
- Analyze multiple data inputs and identify common/distinct features across inputs
- Identify critical insights to help define the church's future vision and goals
 1. *What can we celebrate about our church's journey up to now?*
 2. *What do we need to stop doing?*
 3. *What are we not doing that we need to start doing?*

<i>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</i>	<i>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generates numerical data or data that can be converted into numbers for a statistical review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeks to understand the “why” of a topic through analysis of unstructured information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most often collected through questionnaires and surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most often collected through interviews, open-ended survey responses, focus groups, informal notes or feedback forms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses scales or points to measure satisfaction, agreement, or feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses dialogue to understand attitudes, behaviors, values, concerns, and motivations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis is relatively quick and concrete, and themes are easily identified. However, deep insights and meaning are not always available or possible depending on the survey structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis can be messy and time-consuming. Finding themes and meaning can be challenging, although insights are typically “richer” as they provide deeper understanding.

Sundays are a good time for me and/or my family to attend worship services.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Do you find Sunday mornings to be the best time for you to worship? If not, why not and what other days/times might be more suitable for you?



METHOD

Large Community Groups

- Hand-delivered one-page survey
- Boy Scout Spaghetti Dinner completed 10/28
- Christian Connection, Boy/Girl Scouts Parents & Leadership, Celebration Singers completed 11/28

Individual Community Leaders

- Personal interviews 11/14-11/30 including:
 - School District Superintendent
 - School Principals
 - Town Mayor
 - Police Chief
 - Cranford Family Care

CONTENT

Community Group Survey

- 6 demographic questions
- 4 open-ended qualitative questions regarding issues affecting them and the community, and perceptions of CUMC

Individual Interviews

- Open dialogue with focus on community issues and ways the church might help



METHOD

- Initiative kick-off on 10/17
- 447 Surveys delivered via postal mail 10/31. Also available online via www.zoomerang.com.
- Inclusion in Lamplighter newsletter and Sunday bulletins 10/30-11/20
- Focused inclusion in worship service and in youth/teen Sunday School classes on 11/6
- Available in the church building

CONTENT

- 9 demographic questions
- 18 quantitative “agreement” statements evaluating satisfaction with areas of the church and its environment
- 1 prioritization question regarding the church’s primary concern
- 5 open-ended qualitative questions regarding what we should retain, add or eliminate in the future



Cranford United Methodist Church

- Current and historical records on membership, attendance, and financial contributions
- Drew University study report of CUMC
- 150th Anniversary and Natural Church Development data

Other Sources

- Area demographic studies from Mission Insight, available from the Church Conference
- The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford Mission Study



Background

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Research Findings

- **Understanding Our Community**
 - Community Perspectives

- **Understanding Our Congregation**
 - Congregation Perspectives
 - Congregation Commentary



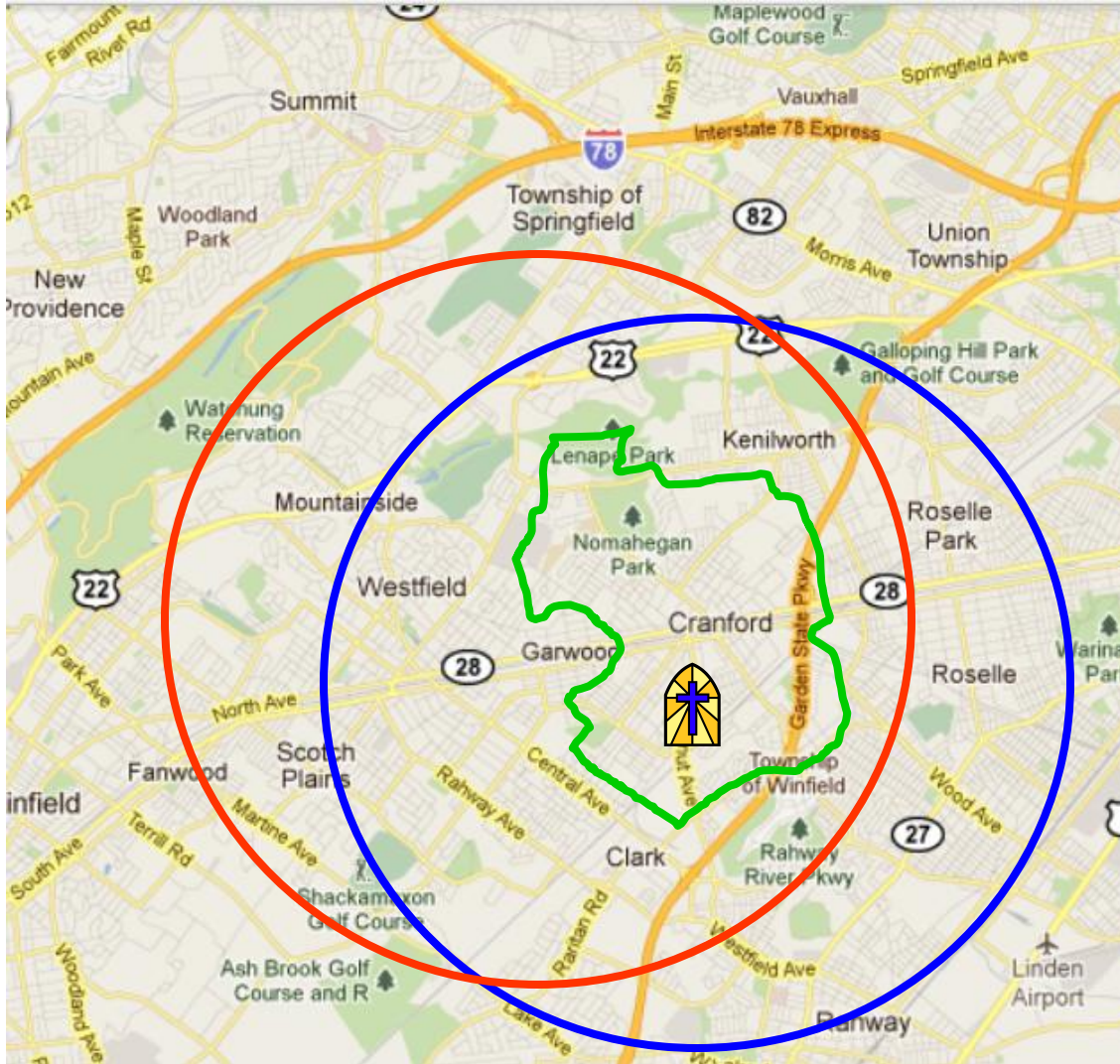
Cranford Township is located in the heart of Union County, and was incorporated in 1871. The downtown, the Rahway River, and the NJ Transit train station are valued amenities to more than 22,000 residents in the four square mile township.

Cranford is a close-knit community where residents are actively involved in schools, sports, civic and community organizations. The Township is proud of its recreational facilities that include two outdoor pools, an indoor pool and fitness complex, bike path, canoe club, tennis courts, sports fields and parks.

The Township operates under a Committee form of government with five commissioners elected at-large for three year terms. The commissioners decide who will serve as mayor and deputy mayor for one-year terms. The Township is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Township Administrator and department heads.

The Cranford Township Public Schools are a comprehensive and successful public school system. Cranford High School has won a series of national and statewide awards for its innovative curriculum, and was ranked 13th in the state by NJ Monthly Magazine, and #502 on Washington Posts' list of national schools. Cranford is also home to the main campus of Union County College.

Understanding Our Community



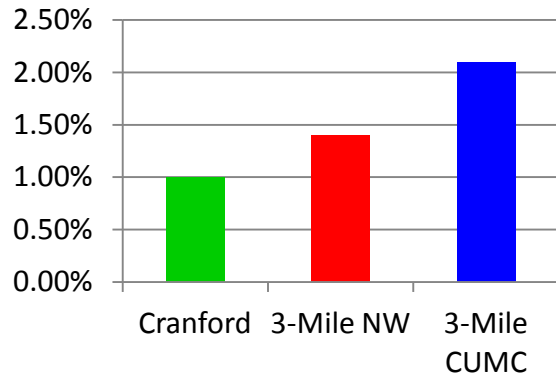
Cranford Township – Zip Code 07016, 4.8 sq. miles.

3-mile radius from CUMC. This area's demographic profile is inconsistent with that of Cranford Township, from which roughly 50% of the current congregation resides.

3-mile radius slightly northwest, which is more aligned with the profile of Cranford.

Understanding Our Community

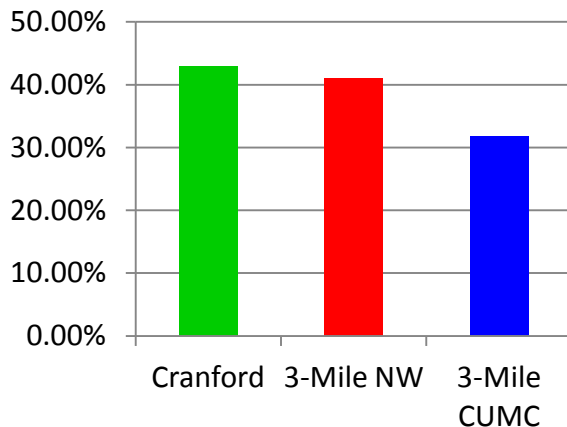
Projected Population Change 2011-2016



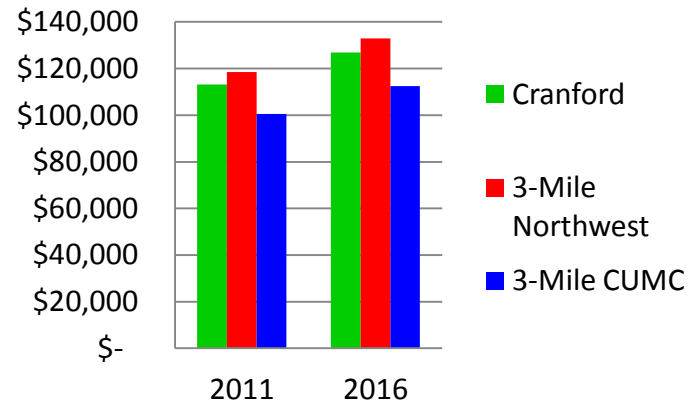
Cranford is an affluent, more educated area than its surrounding communities, but is expected to have much slower population growth in the coming years.

Although overall demographics are not anticipated to change in the future, population growth may change slightly given the introduction of new rental units currently in development in the township.

College Degree



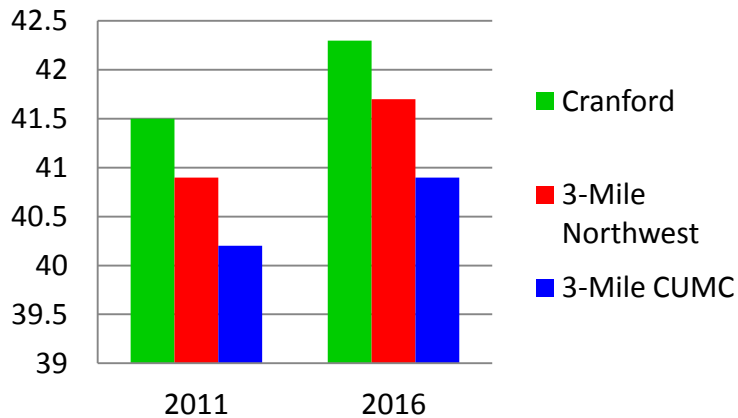
Average Household Income





Understanding Our Community

Average Age



The average age in Cranford is notably higher than in surrounding communities, and continues to increase at a faster pace.

In the future, the most significant growth category will be the 55+ age groups.

Cranford

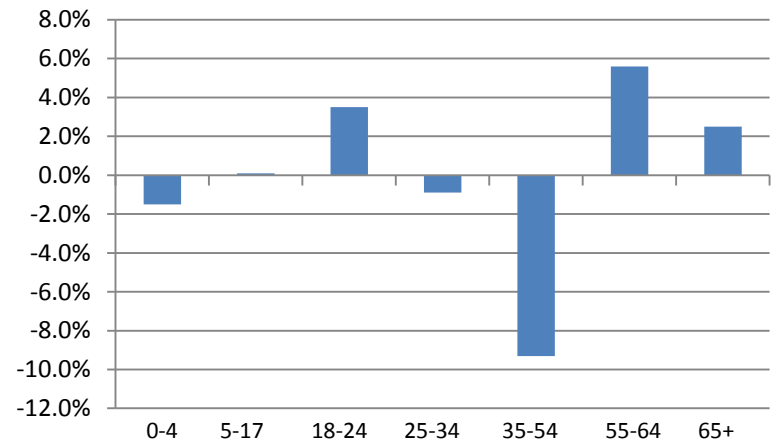
Community Age Profile

2011



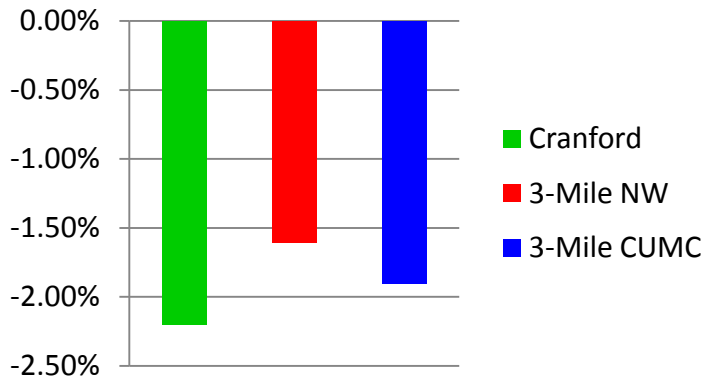
- Age 0-4
- Age 5-17
- Age 18-24
- Age 25-34
- Age 35-54
- Age 55-64
- Age 65+

Community Age Profile Changes 2000-2016

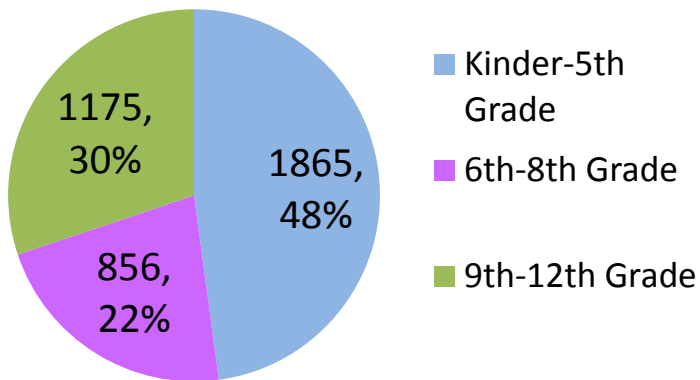


Understanding Our Community

Projected Change in Households with Children 2011-2016



Cranford Students



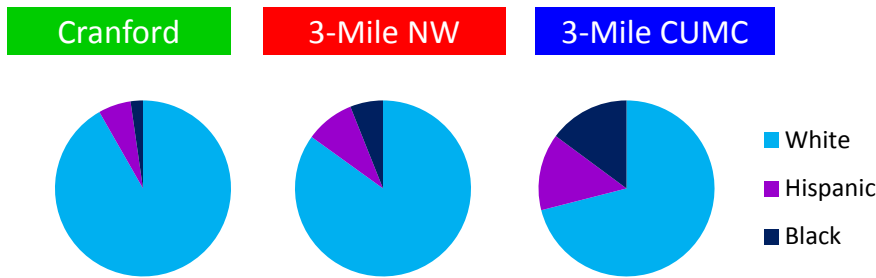
As the population ages, Cranford sees a more significant decline in the future of households with children than its surrounding communities.

According to Dr. Gayle Carrick, Superintendent of Cranford Public Schools:

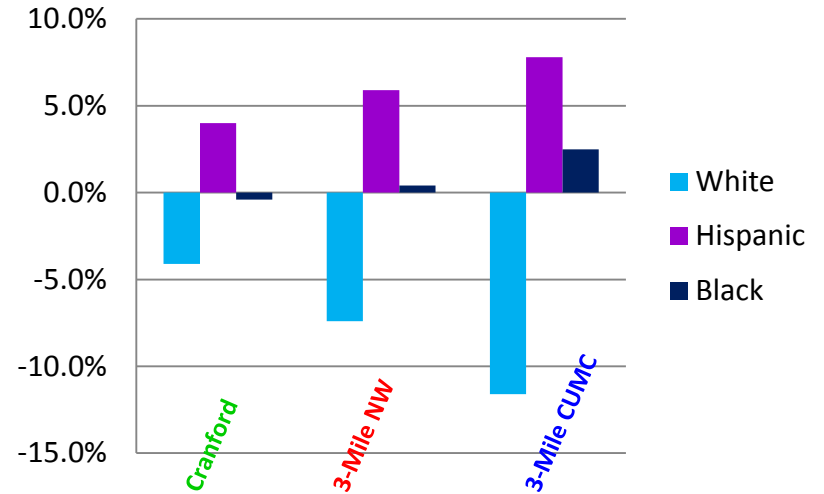
- Current student population grows at 1-2% each year.
- Total student enrollment is 3,896 currently, which is approximately 2,200 families.

It should be noted that Cranford is seeing a growth in student populations that are not residents of the township as a result of economic and other conditions. Cranford is currently conducting a re-registration process for all students.

Racial Diversity



Projected Change in Racial Diversity



Cranford is also significantly less racially diverse, with slower growth among Hispanic and African American ethnicities than in surrounding communities.



Background

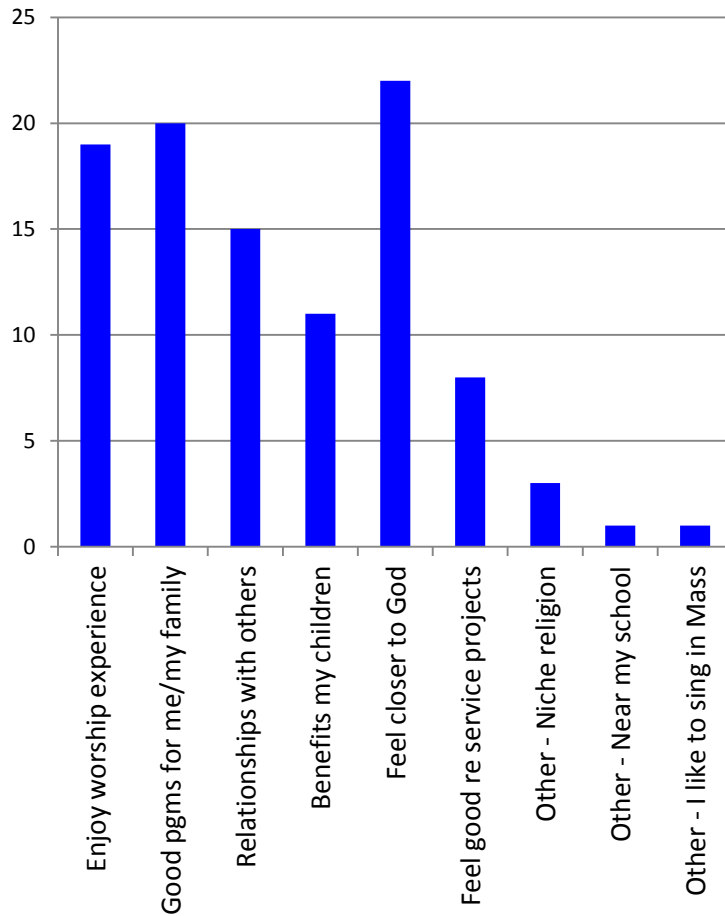
Research Objectives and Methodology

Research Findings

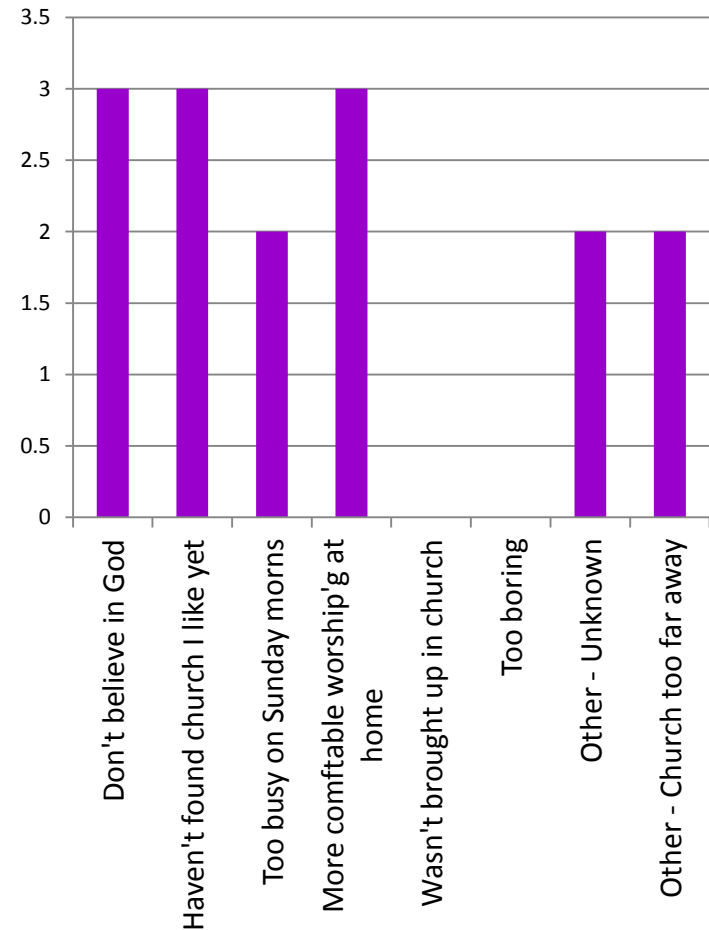
- Understanding Our Community
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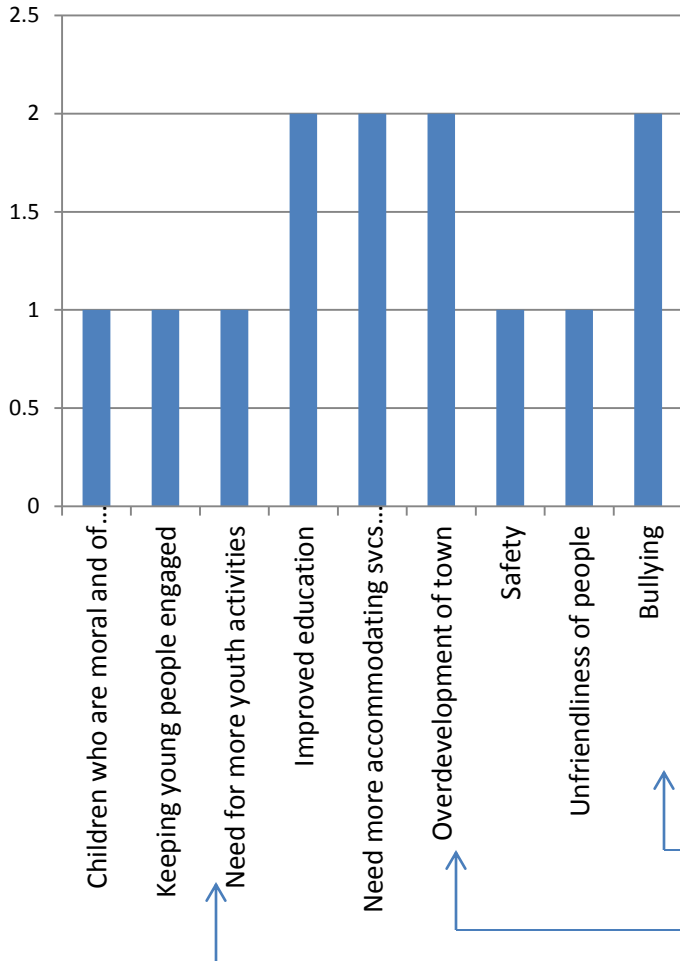
Primary Reasons You Are Part of a Church Community



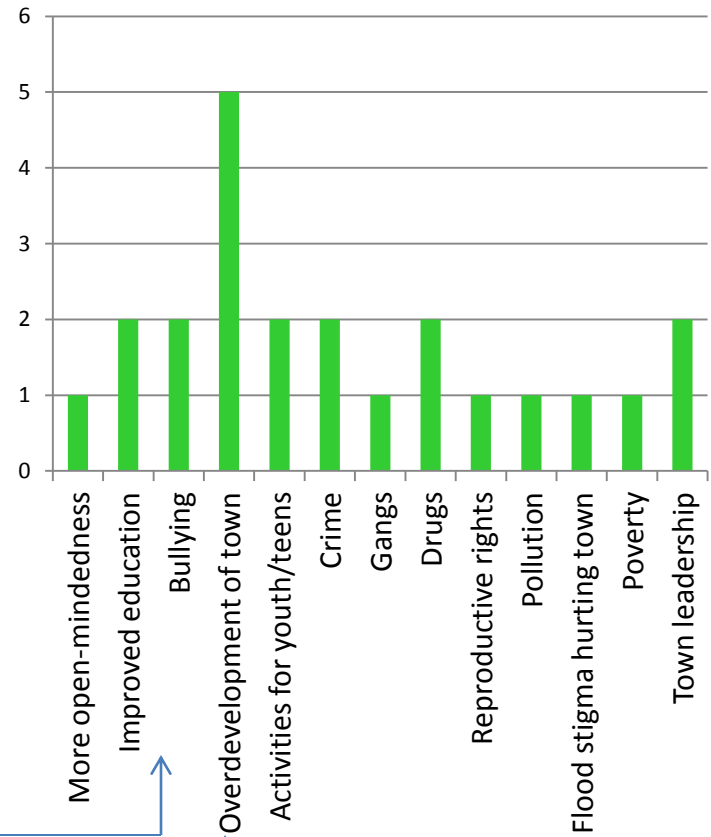
Primary Reasons You Are NOT Part of a Church Community



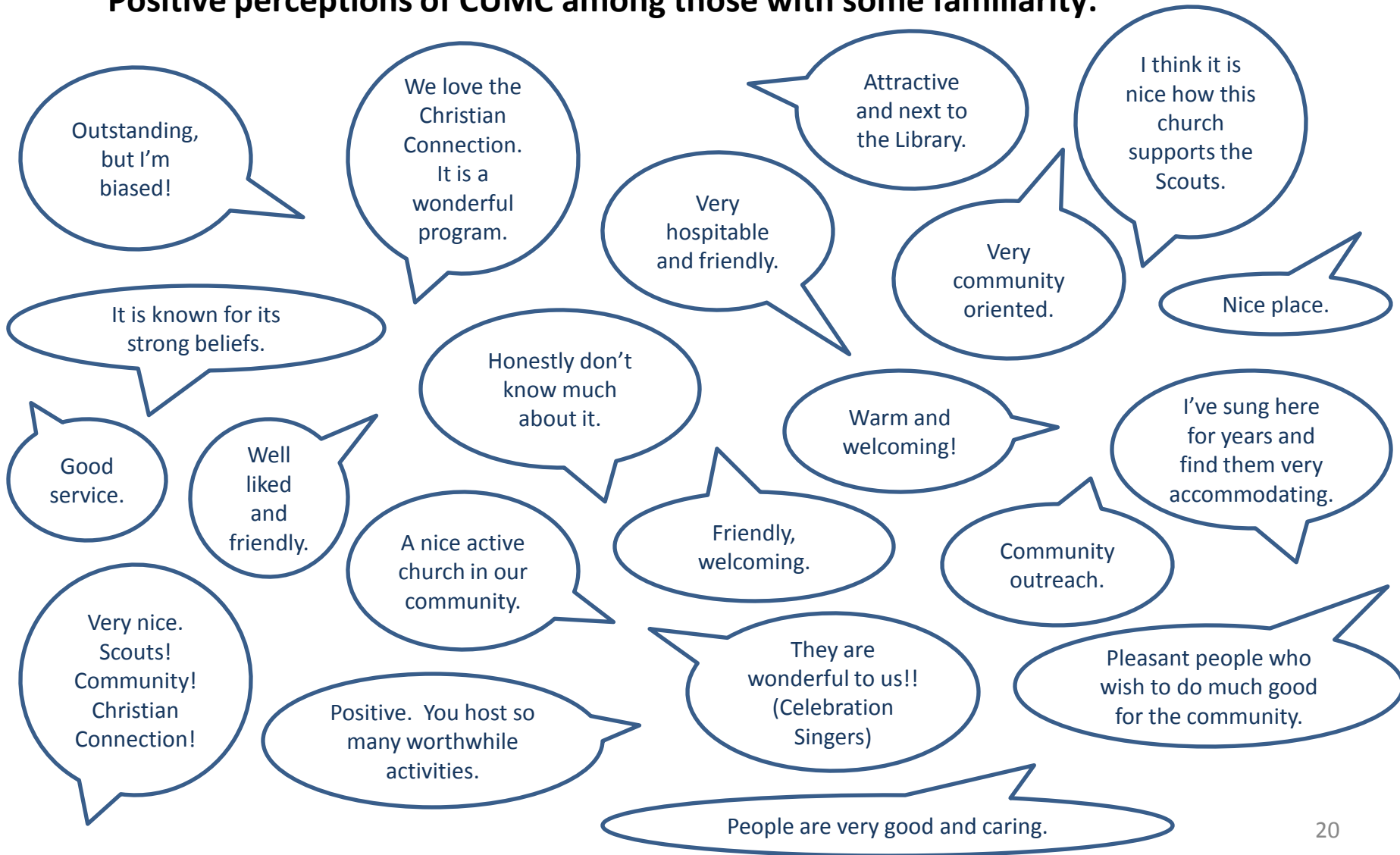
Issues in our community affecting YOU the most?



Issues affecting OUR COMMUNITY the most?



Positive perceptions of CUMC among those with some familiarity:





School District Superintendent

- Need to implement more after-school activities and clubs, on school premises.
- Would like churches to parallel key education messages taking place in the schools in the worship and Sunday Schools including character education, ethics, and HIB (harassment, intimidation and bullying).

Hillside Avenue School (Kinder-8th) Principal

- Pervasive social media and technology expose children to much more at a younger age. Middle school students are at risk.
- Churches have been an integral part of the tremendous community response and support in Cranford. Should continue to reinforce service to others.
- Seeing more children in the schools who are living with relatives due to the economy. Expect enrollments to increase.



Chief of Police

- Budget/fiscal issues, and high taxes, are impacting service delivery from police, fire depts., public works, recreation programs and others. Programs may be hard to continue in the future.
- More family conflicts and domestic violence in town, likely tied to the economy.
- Consumption of alcohol and drugs by minors is a constant concern. Some parents are permissive of consumption as long as it is at home.
- Education on social issues is key – the more the better.
- Great community for volunteerism – maybe we can we expand on that in tough economic times and to address shortage of town services. Have groups “adopt a park”, “adopt a road”, etc.
- There will be limited room for growth in the township, and although there will be some new housing development, it is unclear whether this is a plus or a drain on the community.



Cranford Family Care Director

- There is a lack of support groups for the unemployed or people who have lost their homes or belongings due to recent floods. People have no one to talk to.
- It would be great to see some support groups for these individuals where there was some type of healing service and people can grieve. They are reluctant to accept help (food, mortgage payments) but need someone to listen.
- Township and political figures are not going to act given too much partisan infighting. It has to be the clergy and churches that take action to help.



Background

Research Objectives and Methodology

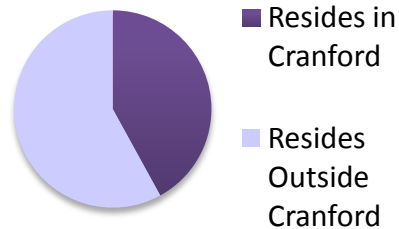
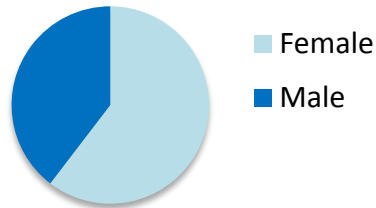
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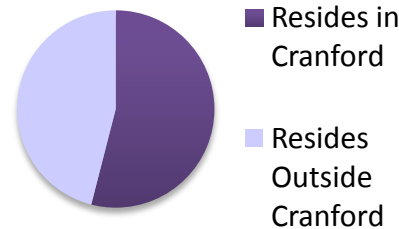
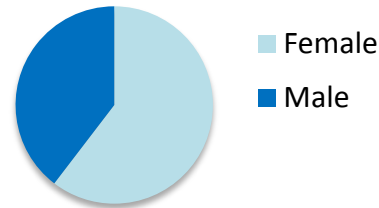
CUMC Active Members

2011: 302



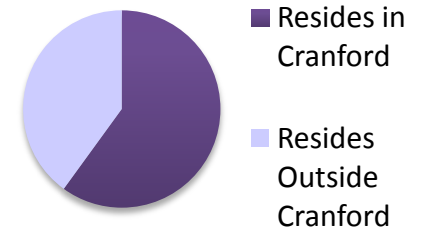
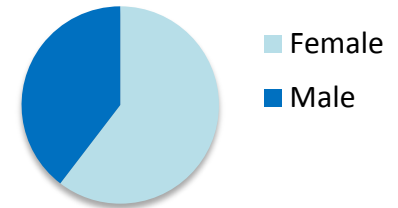
CUMC Inactive Members

2011: 97

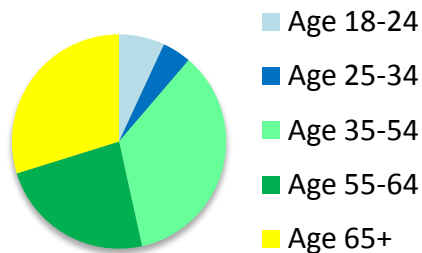


CUMC Active Non-Members

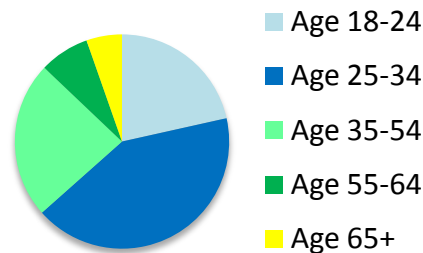
2011: 48



Adult Age Profile 2011

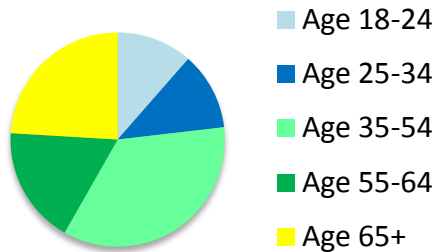


Adult Age Profile 2011



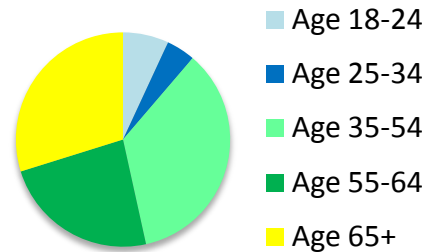
Cranford

Adult Age Profile 2011



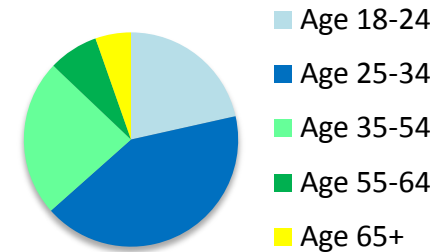
CUMC Active Members

Adult Age Profile 2011



CUMC Inactive Members

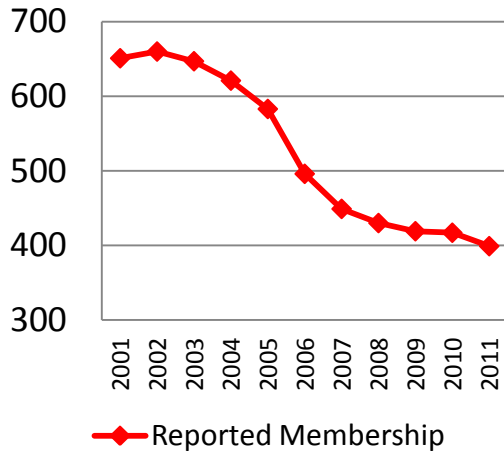
Adult Age Profile 2011



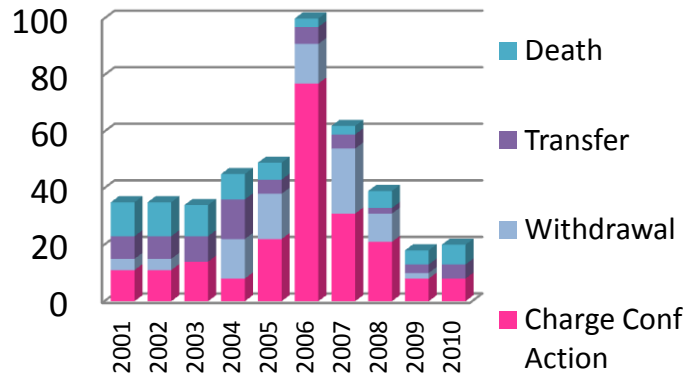
- The percentage of adults age 55 and older is significantly higher among CUMC active members (54%) than Cranford Township (42%).
- Likewise, the percentage of young adults age 18-34 is significantly lower among CUMC active members (11%) than Cranford Township (23%). In correlation, the most significant population of members who have become inactive is among the 18-34 age group (64%).



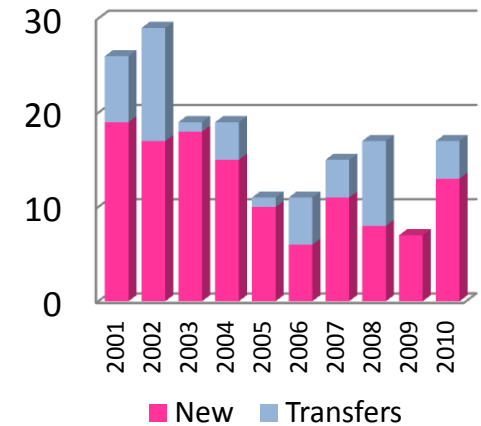
Total Membership*



Membership Attrition Data



Acquisition Data

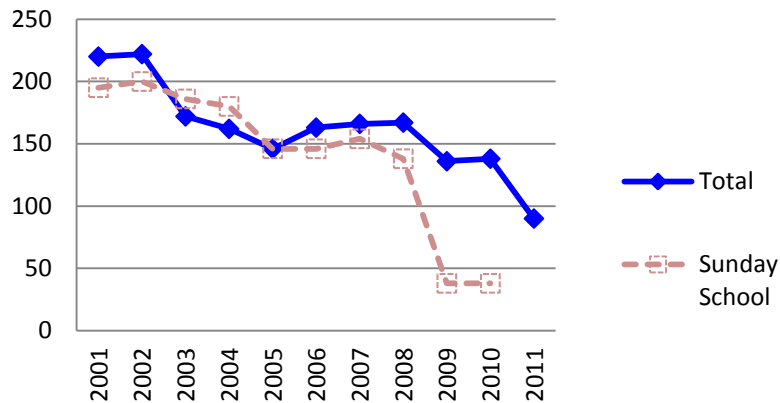


* Steep declines in reported membership occurred 2004-2007 due in part to a 2004 change in which non-participating members were removed from membership figures via Charge Conference Action. This “clean-up” effort over the course of several years resulted in a significant number of individuals being removed from the membership figures. It is likely that the membership figure of 600+ in 2001 may have more accurately reflected membership from many years prior to 2001.

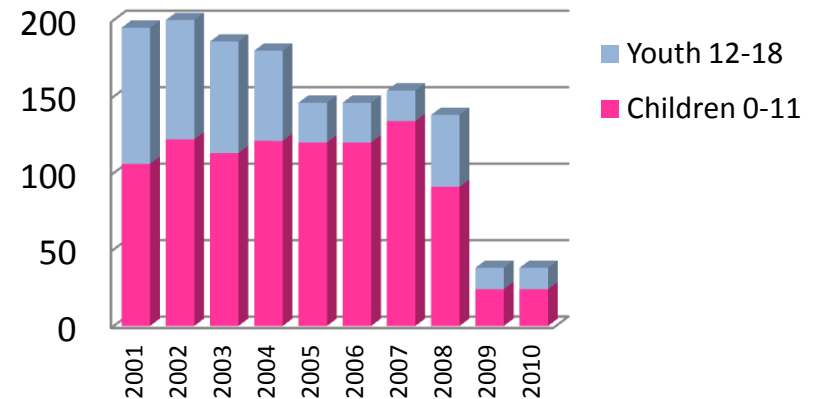
However, even with this recording change, there is still a downward trend in membership given the corresponding decline in new memberships during this same period.



Average Weekly Attendance



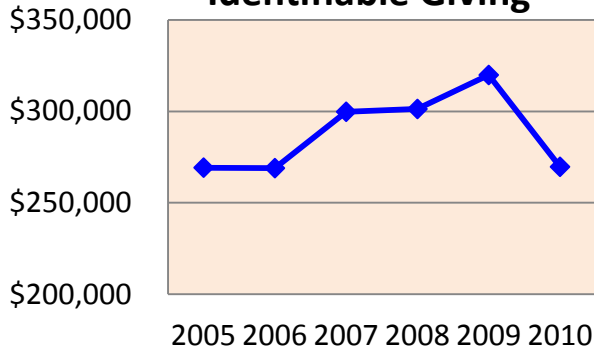
Children Participating in Sunday Church School Groups



- A period of significant decline in avg. weekly attendance occurred 2002-2005, driven in part by a decision to stop counting children present in the beginning of the worship as part of attendees.
- However, declines appear again beginning in 2008 with a sharp decline evident in 2011 as well. These declines are unrelated to reporting changes.
- Although reporting on children is more challenging, there are correlations in the average weekly attendance declines and rates of children participating in Sunday School. Although the specific cause in 2009 forward is unknown at this time, it may indicate that the majority of those who stopped attending were families with multiple children.

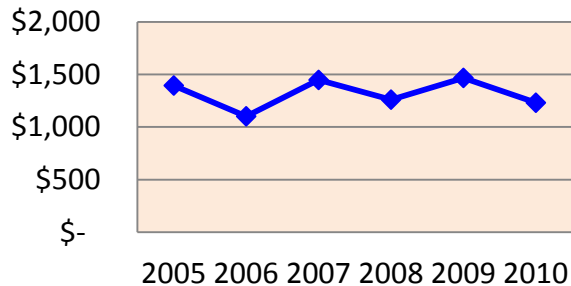


Identifiable Giving



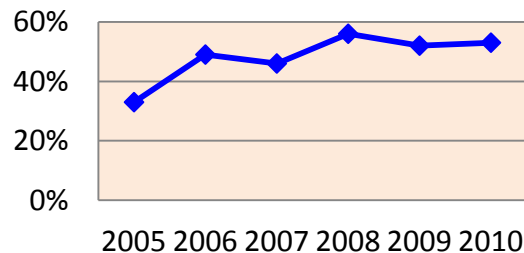
Although identifiable giving has shown significant decline since 2009, average giving per individual, as well as the % of members who are giving, has remained relatively stable or increased in the last 5 years.

Avg. \$ Per Identifiable Giver

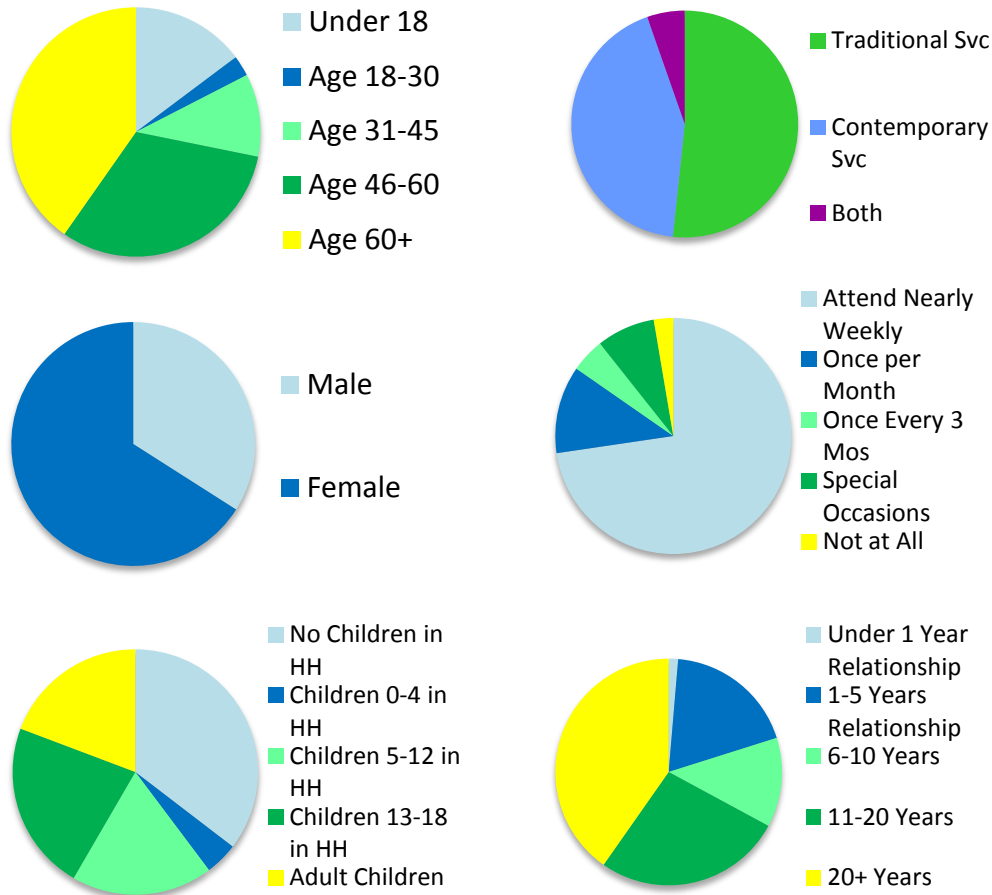


This suggests that individual contributions remain relatively healthy, and have not yet shown dramatic impact as a result of market economic factors.

% Identifiable Givers of Total Members



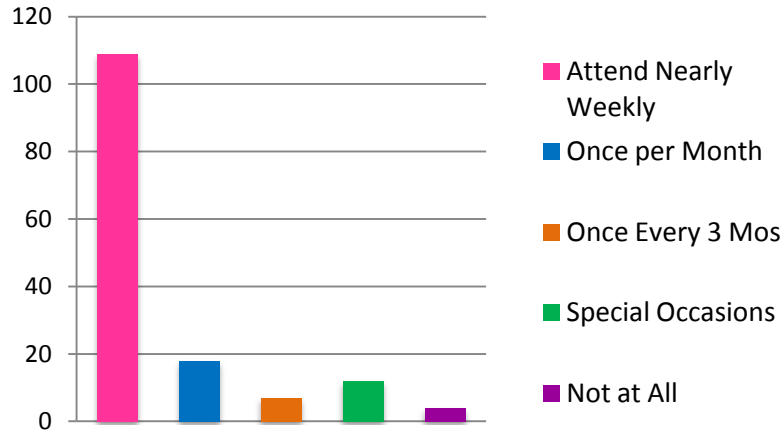
Survey Respondents



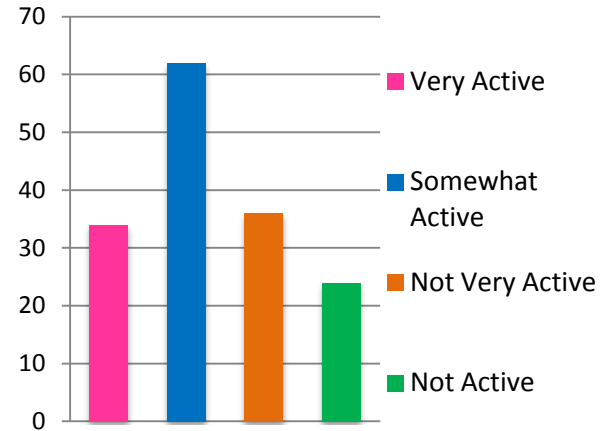
- 149 completed surveys received (33%) from active members, inactive members, and non-members of CUMC.
- The profile of respondents was generally consistent with that of the total membership.
- Responders generally provided complete information, were engaged and passionate in the process, and provided insightful commentary.



Attendance



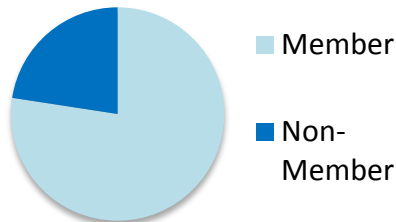
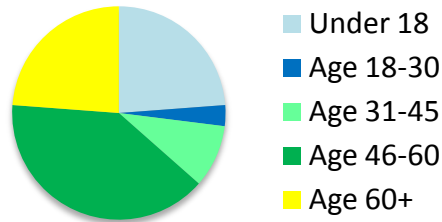
Volunteer Activity



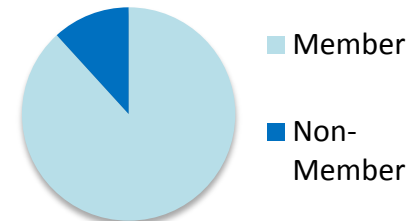
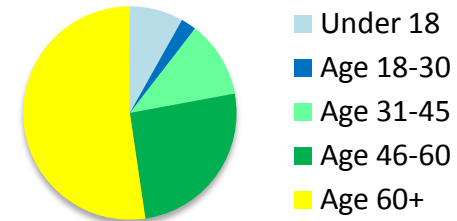
- Respondents indicate a slightly higher level of attendance than statistical data suggests.
- Respondents also indicate a higher level of volunteerism than may be expected, suggesting that the Church’s expectations in this regard may need to be adjusted. Commentary in the survey also noted “volunteer burn-out” as an issue among some.

Congregational Survey Respondents

Contemporary Service



Traditional Service



- Among respondents, the percentage of those who are frequent attendees and active volunteers is roughly the same regardless of the service attended.
- However, the demographic profiles of those attending the two distinct worship styles are significantly different. Worshipers who favor the traditional style are significantly older, and have a greater percentage of members, than those who favor the contemporary style of worship.



Background

Research Objectives and Methodology

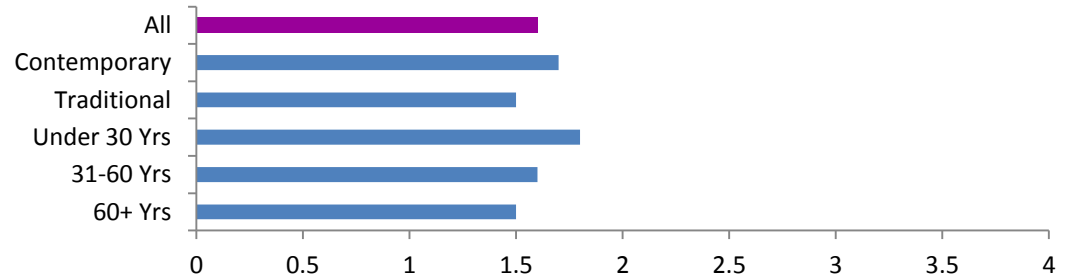
Research Findings

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- Community Perspectives

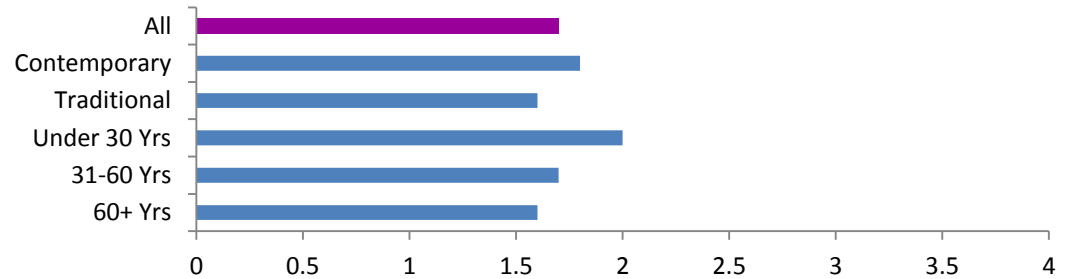
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Congregational Perspectives - Worship

I feel closer to God through my relationship with the church.



This church helps me to live for Christ in my daily life.



The church is effectively meeting the congregation's desires to feel closer to God and to live for Christ in daily life.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

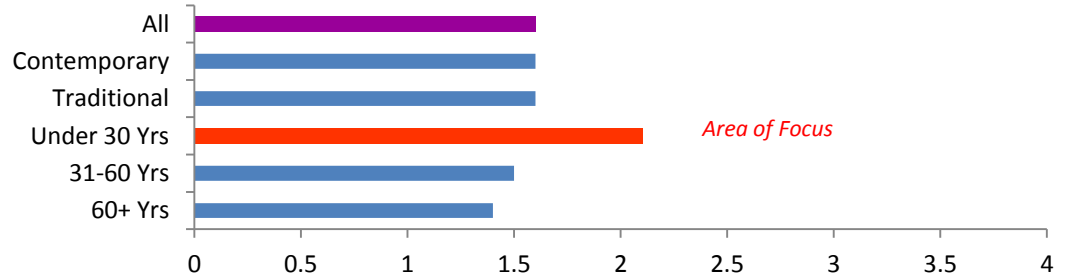
4

Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

I look forward to coming to worship services.



Most in the congregation look forward to worship, although there is opportunity to enrich the experience for those under 30 years old.

There was also some important commentary on worship services:

- Services are growing too lengthy, especially in the 10:00 a.m. service.
- Many believe a younger pastor and leadership team is needed.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

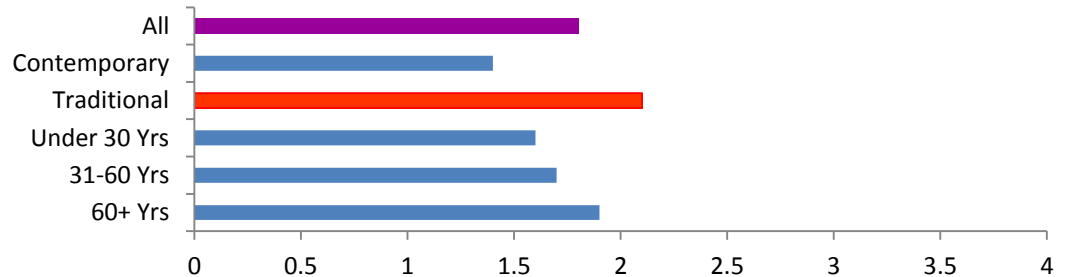
4

Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

I like that there are two different styles of worship services.



Although overall there is general satisfaction with the two different styles of worship, it is a passionate topic for many as evidenced in the survey commentary. Dissatisfaction is most significant among those that attend the traditional service.

- People recognize the benefits of two worship styles, but feel it has significantly divided the church community.
- There is genuine desire to find ways to interact more effectively and to create opportunities for more “blended” or combined services.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

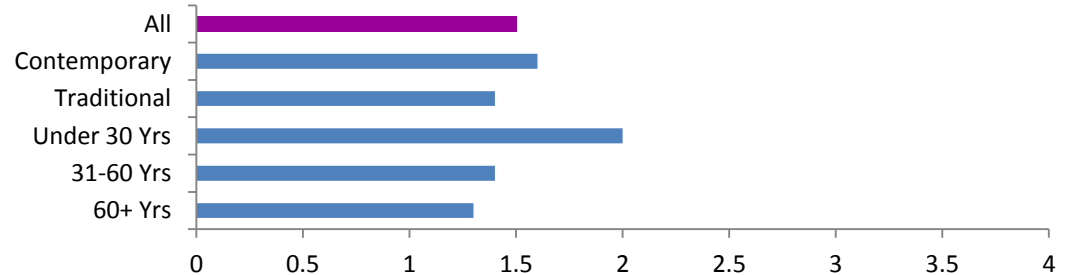
Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

Congregational Perspectives - Music

I enjoy the music programming of the worship experience.



Music was cited as one of the most important components to retain for the church, and has a high level of satisfaction.

- Some comments were received regarding the need to increase the music budget, and to identify new sources and styles of music, both in the contemporary and traditional settings.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

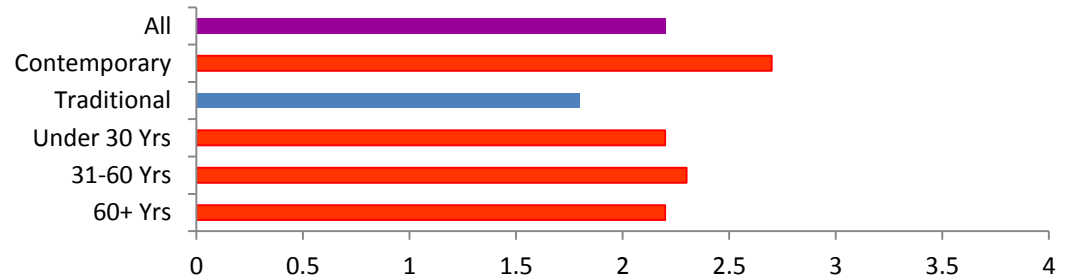
Somewhat Disagree

5

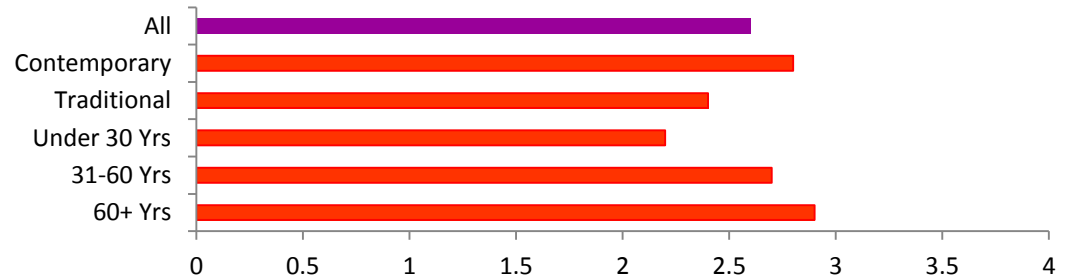
Strongly Disagree

Congregational Perspectives – Children and Youth

The children's Sunday School is
engaging and meaningful.



There are the right programs in
place for teenagers.

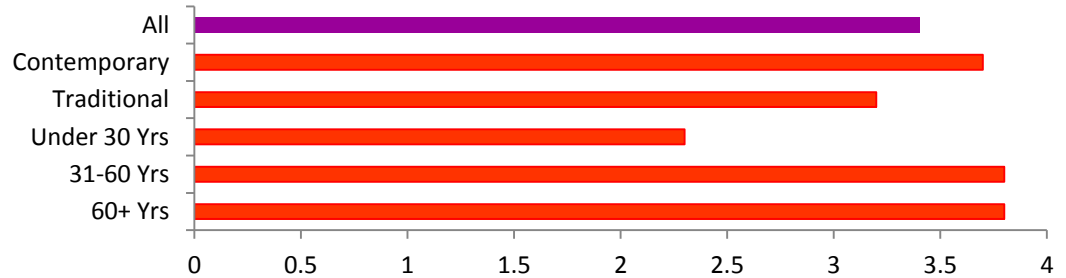


Although Sunday School and youth programs were cited as one of the most important components to retain and develop in the church, the current satisfaction levels for these programs and corresponding commentary indicates some concern.

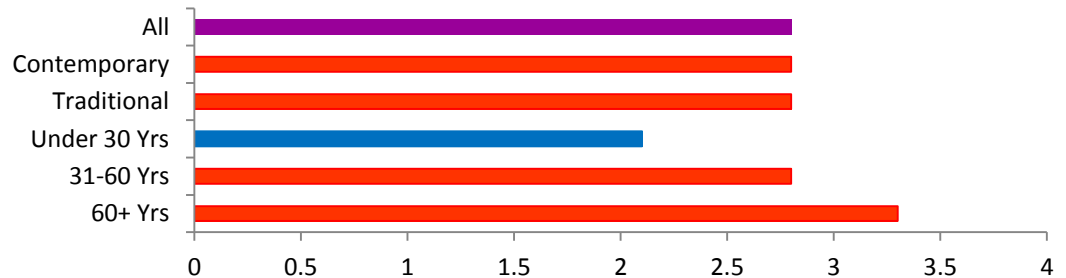
- Comments focused on the desire to use more structured curriculum, more engaging activities and events, and more frequent integration of children in the worship services.

Congregational Perspectives – Adult and Family Programming

There are the right programs in place for single young adults.



There are the right programs in place for young families.



Satisfaction with programs for single young adults and young families is low. Commentary suggests that the primary desires are for more social activities, and expanded/improved adult education and groups.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

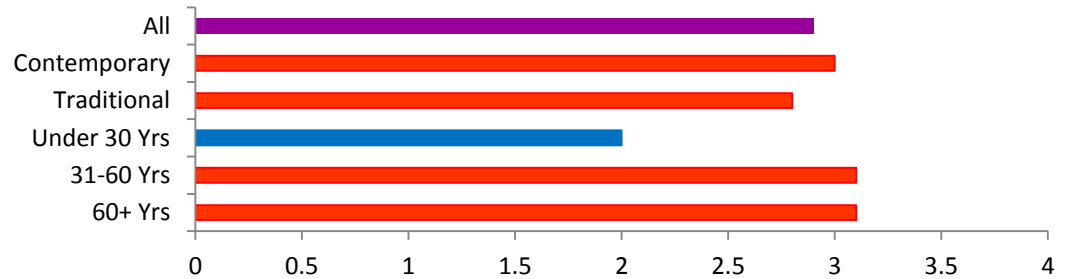
4

Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

There are the right programs in place for seniors.



Satisfaction with programs for seniors is similar to the lower scores seen for programs for single young adults and young families, suggesting that programming overall is an area of need for the church. Commentary suggests that the primary desires are for more social activities, and expanded/improved adult education and groups.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

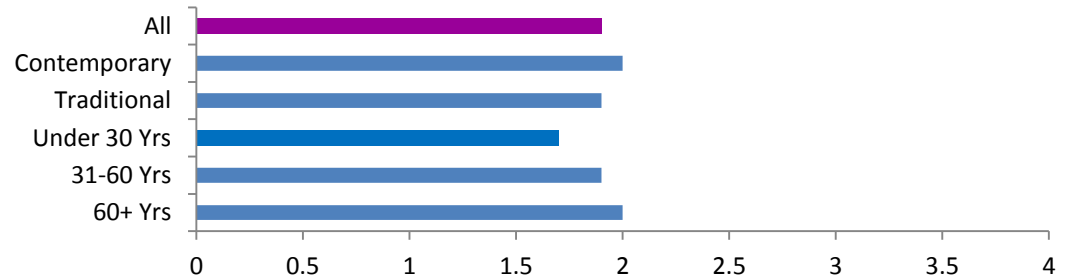
4

Somewhat Disagree

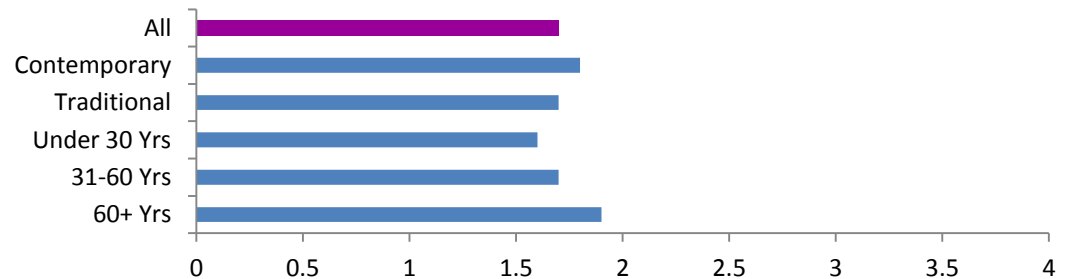
5

Strongly Disagree

This church is well connected with the needs of Cranford and surrounding communities.



I feel good about the mission projects the church supports.



The congregation is highly satisfied with their connection to the community, and believes that local missions and community outreach are not only a critical area to retain for the church, but should be expanded in the future.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

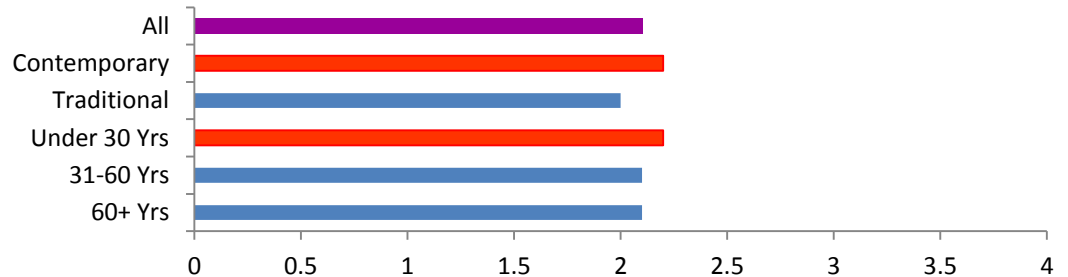
Somewhat Disagree

5

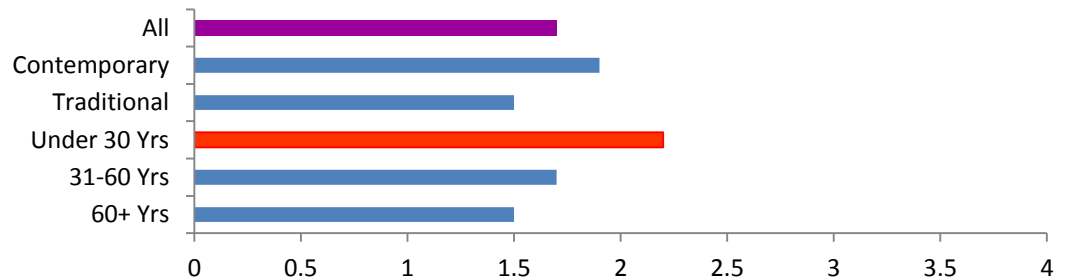
Strongly Disagree

Congregational Perspectives – Relationships & Convenience

There are sufficient opportunities for me to make lasting relationships with others in the congregation.



Sunday mornings are a very convenient time for me to worship.



Younger populations, recognizing the smaller number of attendees in this area, do not feel they have as many opportunities for relationship-building as other groups. They are also more challenged with Sunday morning worship times, with some commentary suggesting a trial of Saturday evenings as an alternative.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

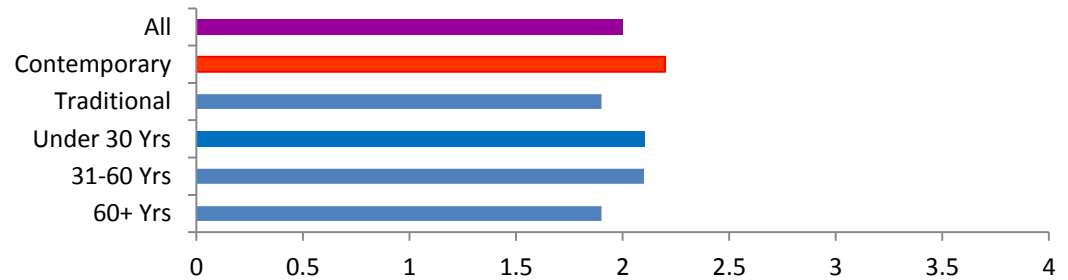
Somewhat Disagree

5

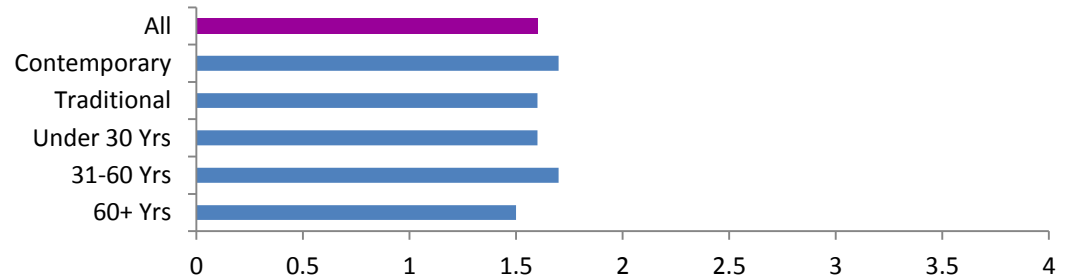
Strongly Disagree

Congregational Perspectives – Facilities & Services

The church does a good job communicating with me.



I feel comfortable in the church building with its current facilities.



Overall satisfaction in these areas is moderate. Many comments were received regarding the need for better advertising and public relations for the church to spread our message and acquire new members.

There was also commentary on a number of desired improvements regarding the building's facilities, with several suggesting the elimination of the elevator plans to repurpose these funds.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

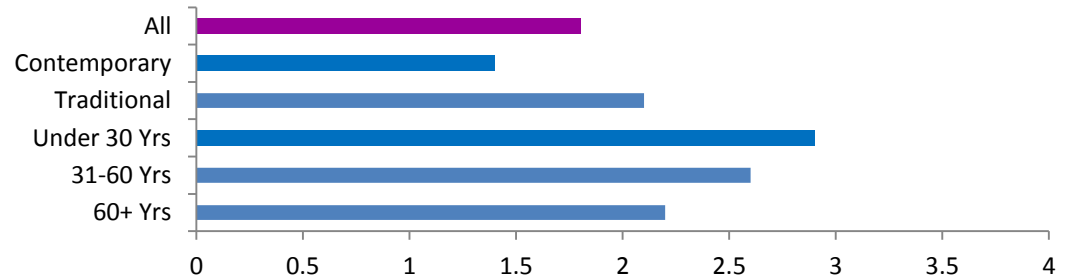
Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

Congregational Perspectives – Change

I would prefer slow and steady change rather than rapid and transformative change.



Responses to individuals' acceptance of change vary widely. Consistent with overall behavioral patterns, younger populations are more comfortable with a more rapid pace of change than older populations.

However, the contemporary service attendees (typically younger), show stronger preference for slow and steady change than the attendees of the traditional service (typically older). This may be an indicator that due to higher overall dissatisfaction levels among traditional service attendees, there is more desire for rapid and transformative change among this group.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

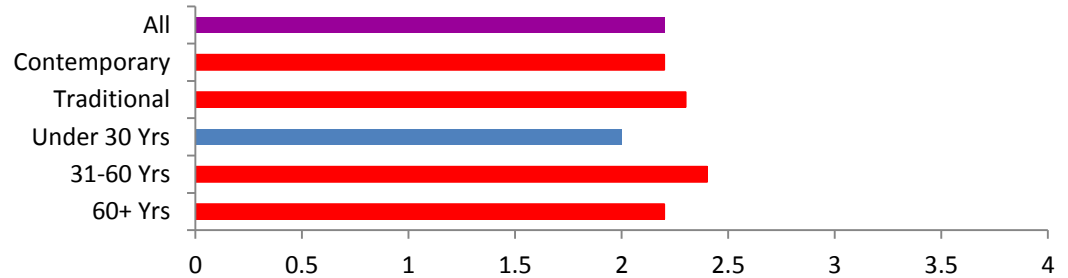
Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

Congregational Perspectives – Change

This church has become more meaningful to me in the last 5 years.



In light of recent membership and attendance declines, this is a key indicator for challenges in future growth unless change is addressed.

1

Strongly Agree

2

Somewhat Agree

3

Neither Agree/Disagree

4

Somewhat Disagree

5

Strongly Disagree

What do you think the church's primary concern should be? (Rank 1-5)

- Caring for the needs of those already related to this church
- Outreach to those with no church home
- Work with other congregations in the area
- Caring for the needs of those in the surrounding communities
- Global and local service projects and missions

ALL	CONT	TRAD	<30 YRS	31-60 YRS	60+ YRS
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	4	2	2
4	5	4	5	4	3
3	3	3	2	3	4
5	4	5	3	5	5

There is nearly universal agreement that immediate focus should be on the needs of the existing congregation and local community vs. global concerns at this time.



Background

Research Objectives and Methodology

Research Findings

- Understanding Our Community
- Community Perspectives

- Understanding Our Congregation
- Congregation Perspectives
- **Congregation Commentary**

What should definitely be retained in this church for the future?

Top Categories	# of Respondents
2 Worship Styles	41
Music	32
Sunday School and Youth Programs	22
Missions	18
Community Programs and Building Use	18
Prayer Chain/Groups	8
Adult Classes/Groups	6
Traditional Service	5
Other	8

What should we stop doing or eliminate?

Top Categories	# of Respondents
2 Worship Styles	8
Elevator	8
Services that are too lengthy	5
Volunteer burn-out	4
Reduce Committees and Meeting Time/Do More Against Less Effort	4
Other	2

What should we add?

Top Categories	# of Respondents
More Social Activities	38
Youth and Child Activities and Events	35
Greater Effort to Retain/Develop New Members	16
Advertising and Public Relations	16
Younger Pastor and Leadership Team	15
More Community Outreach	12

Top Categories	# of Respondents
More Fundraisers	8
More Combined Services	7
Enhanced Greeter Program	7
Improved Sunday School	6
Air Conditioning	6
Sanctuary Renovations	4
Saturday Evening Service	4
Other	10



WORSHIP

We need a pastor who can help a church rebirth itself.

The pastor is important – I hope we can continue with a positive person in this area.

We need a more evangelical pastor.

We need a more engaging pastor.

How about more meaningful worship for all attendees, i.e. more personal sharing?

I'd like more visiting speakers.

Maybe we could have communion only once every 2 months or so.

Good leadership by Pastor Ed.

My former minister had very dynamic sermons that really related to the life and times we live in.

I like personal witness testimonies.

We need sermons to keep focused on issues of today so folks can relate.

My growing ambivalence comes from my not feeling that I need organized religion to have a relationship with God.

I am at odds with the Methodist position on homosexuality.

We should make the services more Bible-based.

Our priority needs to be more compelling worship, especially for young adults and young families. Let's focus on our inward journey.

I think the Methodist Church is welcoming and a religion that is very appealing to many individuals. Get people in to see what we're all about.

We need a younger pastor who is a self-starter.

Add sermons on sin and/or what is expected from us by God in detail.

I think the Pastor and staff deserve credit in recognizing we fall short in some areas.



TWO STYLES OF WORSHIP

Need to stop the emphasis on differences between the 2 worship services. We need to add opportunities for people at both services to come together.

Two services is ok with me, but it has clearly divided this church. There is not a feeling of One Body anymore.

The contemporary service has pulled resources from the traditional service.

We may be called United Methodists, but the congregation is broken into two distinct groups that hardly know each other.

You have created two churches in one. No one knows each other. Can't you find a happy medium? It is sad and unappealing if anyone came to the 10:00 a.m. service. No children, no youth, no connection.

It's time to mesh the two services together somehow, but represent both types of music.

I would like the name of United Methodist Church to stand for united. Stop having 2 separate services. One larger service provides more spirit and energy, and is more attractive to visitors.

Make one service and alternate styles. We need everyone together. More life.

One service with more people and energy would be much more meaningful.

I'm sorry that so few people come to the traditional service anymore.

MUSIC

I'd like to see a choral group that specializes in older well-known hymns that everyone can sing.

Perhaps a local theater or musical group could use our stage and do a benefit for us?

Let's make a rehearsal space for handbells. This group could be a self-sufficient group with concerts that raise money for CUMC.

I'd like to hear the organ played more.

The music ministry has been underfunded and it shows.

Improve contemporary service music.

Need more contemporary music.

Need more contemporary music (like Star 99.1) and updated programming.

We need more current praise and worship music during the contemporary service.



EDUCATION

We need an organized Sunday School curriculum that is a contemporary approach.

We need to prioritize teaching from and study of God's word – more adult Sunday School.

We need more relevant small groups, young adult and youth ministry.

Need curriculum books for all Sunday School classes.

Add studies on topics e.g. church and homosexuality, Jews and Christians.

I think Laurie is doing a great job.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Young people are our future.

VBS should be expanded.

We need a more engaging program for older children.

Stop having youth all together (6th-12th grades). Older kids don't like attending with 6th graders.

Kids need to be a bigger part of the service.

Encourage Shooting Stars and youth musicals.

I'd like to see more children's time in 10:00 a.m. service.

I think children should join the traditional worship now and then to learn.



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Add more retreats.

Reduce fellowship time to once a month, and make it more substantial like a breakfast.

Book club? Teen band?

Young mothers group, with babysitting offered.

Need opportunities for different groups to interact socially. Parents night out with dinner, movie, games with volunteers from congregation.

Have a birthday party to celebrate everyone.

We need to have more fun.

Friendships with people might engage more to come to our church.

Add more fun.

Stop the meetings after church. This should be a time for members to greet one another socially and mix.

We must bring the church together with more activities for all ages.

Need to create more opportunities for members in both services to interact.

Group fun activities! Bingo. Dance night. Amateur night. Picnics. Hikes. Sports trips.

The pancake breakfast was a good way to talk with church people.

A church family fun day like an outdoor or indoor carnival.



MEMBERSHIP

Membership drop is my primary concern.

Increasing membership has to be our number one primary concern.

A vibrant, active community of faith will draw others. If we sound desperate to “recruit” others, it will be a turn-off.

Current members need to do more to invite others in.

Folks need to be encouraged to come out more, sadly enough, but if that’s what it takes, let’s do it. I’m suggesting primarily the pastor, but smiles from others is good too.

We must increase church membership.

Some people only come at holidays. If we can get them to come to a service, they will be hooked! 😊

Social groups that others could be invited to may help others become connected to CUMC and possibly become members.

We need to do more to find out why people haven’t been attending before they drop out completely.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVERTISING

A formal publicity committee is needed, and we should use more social media too – can youth drive that?

We need to evangelize to Cranford community, and spread word of Jesus and existence of this church.

Important events in the church like confirmation help engage friends and neighbors. Promote more.



BUDGET

As someone who donates significantly, I feel taken advantage of. How can we motivate others to contribute a fair share? If it was up to me (not my wife), I would have left this church long ago for another one.

Why didn't you ask how much people contribute? Not being active doesn't mean you don't give.

Let's sell the building and create a farm on our land. Grow and give away food; teach/live sustainability.

We should unite with other empty Methodist churches; use one campus and sell the others. Use the money for leadership – youth ministers, effective Christian Education supervisor, etc.

I am very concerned and unhappy about the handling of faith lift/elevator monies.

Need to educate more on tithing and what it costs to maintain a church.

Need to get budget in line; cut pastor salary and benefits.

Sell the parsonage.

Educate the congregation on tithing and budget. The small amounts being given are unacceptable.

Bring in a younger, cheaper minister and stop paying for everything in the parsonage.

Downsize pastor and parsonage.

Impress upon the Conference that we can no longer afford to pay for the most experienced pastors.



COMMUNITY

I love that it's "Christian Connection" and not secular. We need to bring Jesus' message in many ways.

Christmas giving should be for local organizations rather than global. People need aid here in the U.S. too!

I love the people at CUMC and all the opportunities to serve.

VOLUNTEERISM

Focus on doing fewer things well, rather than too many things poorly. And if you don't have enough volunteers, don't do it. Stop burning out current volunteers.

I find myself pulling back out of disillusionment and a feeling of being burned out.

Only meet when needed so people feel they are participating.



FACILITIES AND SERVICES

We should think about using technology in new ways.

Get healthier food at fellowship hour.

We need an elevator and a central location for coffee hour.

CHURCH MISSION/RECOGNITION

We need our own personal (CUMC) mission.

We need to build a brand for this church. Stop fighting the need to rethink our direction.

I am encouraged that we are keeping an open mind about how to better our church as a member of the community.

This should be a place where all can find a friend in God and in each other.

I enjoy my church experiences.

I'd like to see CUMC become a leader and not a follower. Stand up for our Christian values and not be afraid to be politically incorrect.

I have had good years with this church.

Seeking humility in our daily lives. To do God's will first. Giving that asks no reward.

I like this church's willingness to change and adapt.