The U.S. Congregational Life Survey

Frequencies from leaders of 134 growing ELCA congregations

Congregational Profile

Property and Geography

1. What is the approximate seating capacity of the space where your largest worship service is held?
   Ave = 258.2 Median=240

2. In what year was your congregation officially founded?
   Ave. = 1941 Median=1960

3. In what year did your congregation begin worshiping at its current location? Ave. = 1959 Median=1967

4. Is your congregation's ***primary worship service*** held in a church, temple, mosque, or some other kind of building? (Mark only ***one***.)
   95.4% A church
   2.3 A school building
   0.8 Other (specify):
   0.8 A community center
   0.8 A store front

5. Does this building belong to your congregation or does it belong to another group that loans or rents space to you?
   95.4% Building belongs to our congregation or denomination
   4.6 Building belongs to another group, and we rent the space
   0.0 Building belongs to another group, but we do ***not*** pay rent or fees

6. What county is your congregation in? 100%=USA

7. Is your congregation formally affiliated with a denomination, convention, or some similar kind of association?
   100.% Yes
   0.0 No

8. If ***yes***, what are the names of all denominations or other associations that your congregation belongs to? 100% ELCA

9. Is your congregation affiliated with any local association of congregations such as a local council of churches?
   60.2% Yes
   39.8 No
   0.0 Not sure

Size of Congregation and Attendance Records

10. How many people are associated ***in any way*** with the religious life of this congregation—counting both adults and children, counting both regular and irregular participants, counting both official or registered members and also participating nonmembers? What is the total number of persons associated with this congregation to any degree at all? Ave. = 794 Median=650

11. How many people—counting both adults and children—***regularly participate*** in the religious life of your congregation—***whether or not*** they are officially members of your congregation? Ave. = 477.4 Median=370

12. How many ***adults***—people 18 years or older—regularly participate in the religious life of your congregation?
    Ave. = 344.3 Median=300

13. How many children in the following age groups regularly participate in the activities of this congregation?

    Under 5 years . . . . . Ave. = 37.7 Median=23
    5 to 11 years . . . . . Ave. = 56.2 Median=40
    12 to 18 years . . . . . Ave. = 47.2 Median=32

14. So far this year and for each of the last five years, what is your best estimate of average weekly attendance at worship services for this congregation? If you have more than one worship service, record the average attendance for all services combined.

Year	Average Weekly Attendance	
2001	Ave. = 266.4	Median=226
2000	Ave. = 253.8	Median=225
1999	Ave. = 241.2	Median=210
1998	Ave. = 228.1	Median=200
1997	Ave. = 214.1	Median=182
1996	Ave. = 200.1	Median=170

Community Involvement

15. In the last 12 months, has this congregation done any of the following to reach out to ***nonmembers***? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    82.4% Mailed or distributed newsletters, letters, or flyers
    71.0 Placed a paid ad in a newspaper or magazine
    26.7 Advertised on the radio or TV
    65.6 Placed a paid ad in the phone book or yellow pages
    78.6 Established or maintained a web site for the congregation
    51.9 Had an activity (fair, chili supper) to meet people in the neighborhood
    17.6 Conducted or used a survey of the community
    90.8 Encouraged people already in the congregation to invite a new person
    42.7 Tried to identify and contact people who recently moved into the area
    50.4 Sponsored or participated in an outreach service or other public event intended to bring people into your congregation
    94.7 Sent a letter or other material to people who visited your congregation
    70.2 Had someone from your congregation telephone people who visited your congregation
    55.7 Had someone from your congregation go to the home of people who visited your congregation
    46.6 Had a special committee to work on recruiting new members

16. How often is this congregation's building or facilities used or rented by community groups ***not connected to the congregation***?
    42.5% Daily or most days
    33.9 At least weekly
    13.4 At least monthly
    8.7 Occasionally
    1.6 Never

17. Does this congregation's worship services focus on particular group(s) ***of people***? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 85.5% No, our concern is general
    - 12.2 Yes, certain age groups (older adults, young people)
    - 0.8 Yes, certain language or racial-ethnic groups
    - 3.1 Yes, certain groups with a common concern or interest (artists, campers, resort residents)
    - 0.0 Yes, certain groups with similar lifestyles (singles, homosexuals)
    - 0.0 Yes, certain socio-economic groups (blue collar, public housing residents, upper income)
    - 6.9 Yes, another type of group (please specify):

Social Service or Community Activities

18. In the past 12 months, did your congregation provide any of the following services for your own congregation's members or for people in the community? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 3.8% Housing for senior citizens (nursing homes, assisted living)
    - 18.3 Housing for other groups (crisis, youth shelters, homeless, students)
    - 45.8 Other senior citizen programs or assistance (Meals on Wheels, transportation)
    - 19.8 Prison or jail ministry
    - 13.0 Care for persons with disabilities (skills training, respite care, home care)
    - 69.5 Counseling or support groups (marriage or bereavement counseling, parenting programs, women's groups)
    - 36.6 Substance abuse or 12-step recovery programs
    - 39.7 Day care, pre-school, before or after-school programs
    - 0.8 Elementary school
    - 52.7 Other programs for children and youth (job training, literacy program, scouting, sports)
    - 92.4 Emergency relief or material assistance (food, clothes for the needy)
    - 61.8 Health-related programs and activities (blood drives, screenings, health education)
    - 13.7 Immigrant support activities (English as a second language, refugee support, interpreting service)
    - 6.1 Activities for unemployed people (preparation for job seeking, skills training)
    - 12.2 Voter registration or voter education
    - 15.3 Community organizing or neighborhood action groups
    - 9.2 Political or social justice activities (civil rights, human rights)
    - 7.6 Animal welfare or environmental activities
    - 42.0 Other welfare, community service, or social action activities not mentioned above
    - 32.1 Sporting activities or teams (intramural teams)
    - 52.7 Arts, music, or cultural activities or programs
    - 46.6 Hobby or craft groups
    - 55.0 Other social, recreational, or leisure activities

Educational Program and Activities

19. Does your congregation have religious education classes, Sunday school, or Sabbath school for any of the following age groups? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 99.2% Religious education classes for children 11 years of age and younger
    - 98.5 Religious education classes for youth, 12-18 years of age
    - 95.4 Religious education classes for adults
    - 0.0 No religious education classes

If yes, to any of the items in Q19:

20. How many children (11 years and younger) attend at least one of these classes in a typical week? Ave=60.1 Median=50

21. How many youth (12-18 years of age) attend at least one of these classes in a typical week? Ave. = 34.7 Median=25

22. How many adults attend at least one of these classes in a typical week? Ave. = 35.9 Median=25

23. Is there an elementary school or high school provided by the congregation? If yes, how many children are enrolled?
    - 98.5% No, our congregation does not provide any schools
    - 1.5 Yes, we have an elementary school and Ave. = 100.0 Median=100 children are enrolled
    - 0.8 Yes, we have a junior high and/or high school and Ave. = 100 Median=75 students are enrolled

Spiritual Growth

24. Many congregations make use of small groups (or cells) for sharing and spiritual growth. Which of the following best describes the situation in your congregation? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 13.7% We do not have such groups here
    - 17.6 A group or groups meet here, but they are not central to our congregational life
    - 64.1 Small groups are an important part of our strategy to involve people in the congregation
    - 34.4 Small groups are an important part of our strategy to involve people in community service or mission and ministry

25. Which of the following best describes the group prayer life of this congregation? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 11.5% We have no organized prayer groups
    - 11.5 We have prayer groups, but they meet infrequently
    - 10.7 We have regular prayer groups that meet at certain times of the year (Lent, revivals)
    - 39.7 We have regular prayer groups that are part of our small group or cell program
    - 35.9 We have regular prayer groups that are attached to specific classes, groups, or ministries
    - 47.3 We have some other type of prayer groups

26. Once a person has joined your congregation, are there any planned procedures designed to ensure that he or she becomes integrated into the life of this congregation? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 43.5% Follow-up visits by clergy, lay leaders, or members
    - 32.8 Designated people extend hospitality and invite them for meals
    - 68.7 A group or course for new members
    - 64.1 Invitation to join a small group, fellowship group, or similar group
    - 75.6 Invitation to take on a task within the congregation or in service to the community
    - 18.3 Other procedures or activities not mentioned above
    - 3.8 No planned procedures

History and Current View of the Congregation

27. In the last ***five*** years has any of the following occurred? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)
    - 3.8% This congregation absorbed another congregation which was closed
    - 0.8 Merged with other congregations of the same denomination, resulting in this congregation
    - 0.0 Merged with other congregations ***of different denominations***, resulting in this congregation
    - 0.0 Experienced a major conflict that resulted in the congregation splitting into two or more congregations
    - 16.8 Experienced a conflict that led some people to leave the congregation
    - 0.8 Experienced a conflict that led the pastor, minister, or priest to leave the congregation
    - 14.5 Been involved in planting or growing a new congregation
    - 8.4 This congregation was established as a result of "church planting" by another congregation or a growth program of the denomination
    - 18.3 Reorganized or started new worship services for distinct age, racial or ethnic, socio-economic, or interest groups
    - 30.5 Reorganized or started new worship services for people who typically do not attend ("seeker services")
    - 27.5 One or more members entered ministry
    - 28.2 None of the above

28. Does your congregation use electronic mail (e-mail) or the internet to communicate with attendees?
    - 73.4% Yes
    - 26.6 No

29. ***Politically***, would your congregation be considered . . .
    - 39.2 More on the conservative side
    - 53.6 Right in the middle
    - 7.2 More on the liberal side

30. ***Theologically***, would your congregation be considered . . .
    - 25.0% More on the conservative side
    - 60.2 Right in the middle
    - 14.8 More on the liberal side

31. Does your congregation or denomination have any special rules or prohibitions regarding the following?

	Yes	No
Prohibitions against members smoking	1.6%	98.4
Drinking alcohol	0.8	99.2
What people eat	0.0	100.0
Dancing	0.0	100.0
Dress, hairstyle, jewelry, or makeup	0.0	100.0
Gambling	6.4	93.6
How much money people give to the congregation	0.8	99.2
Unmarried adults living together	17.1	82.9
Homosexual behavior	37.5	62.5

32. What are the biggest sources of income for this congregation? (Mark up to ***three*** options.)
    - 99.2% Offerings, pledges, donations, dues
    - 16.0 Income from charges for use of the congregation's facilities or buildings
    - 19.8 Income from trust funds, investments, or bequests
    - 3.1 Financial support from the denomination or outside the congregation
    - 0.0 Grants or income from local, state, or federal government
    - 2.3 Grants or income from non-governmental sources
    - 3.8 Other (specify):_____

33. Does your congregation operate with a formal, written annual budget?
    - 99.2% Yes
    - 0.8 No

34. What is the total amount of money your congregation received in income from all sources during your most recent fiscal year? Ave. = $360,419 Median=$277,647

35. Of this amount, how much came from individuals' donations, dues, or contributions?
    Ave. = $322,343 Median = $256,098

36. What was your total congregational budget for the most recent fiscal year—the total amount that your congregation spent for all purposes, including standard operating costs, salaries, debt service, money sent to your denomination or other religious organizations, and all other purposes?
    Ave. = $329,007 Median = $273,164

37. Of this amount, how much was used for the congregation's operating expenses: salaries, building maintenance, utilities, and debt service? Ave. = $276,441 Median = $215,000

38. Which ***one*** of the following best describes your congregation's financial situation?
    - 70.5% We have an increasing financial base
    - 27.1 We have an essentially stable financial base
    - 2.3 We have a declining financial base
    - 0.0 Our financial situation is a serious threat to our ability to continue as a viable congregation

39. What is the role of the person who completed the majority of this form?
    - 73.8% Minister, pastor, or priest
    - 17.7 Administrator or other paid congregational staff member
    - 6.9 Clerk, treasurer, or other lay leader
    - 1.5 Other (please specify):

Staffing

40. How many people are employed by your congregation? For each category below, please indicate the number of full-time and the number of part-time ***paid*** employees.

Number of:	Full-time	Part-time
Ordained professionals	Ave=1.24	Ave=0.75
Lay professionals	Ave=1.22	Ave=1.28
Clerical/secretarial	Ave=1.47	Ave=3.52
Custodial/maintenance	Ave=2.20	Ave=3.50
Daycare, preschool, or school employees	Ave=1.08	Ave=1.63
Other employees	Ave=1.20	Ave=2.57

Worship Activities

Please answer questions 41 to 45 based on the worship service with the *largest* attendance.

41. How long does this worship service generally last?

60.0%	Up to 1 hour
40.0	Between 1 and 1.5 hours
0.0	Between 1.5 and 2 hours
0.0	Over 2 hours

42. What type of order of service or program is used?

36.2%	Written liturgy or Prayer Book
58.5	Written service outline or bulletin
0.8	No written outline, but a standard approach is used
4.6	Very flexible; varies from week to week
0.0	None

43. Which of the following are part of this worship service? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)

64.9%	Applause	87.0	Use of piano
87.0	Laughter	68.7	Use of organ
0.8	Use of incense	71.0	Use of hymn books

100.0	Singing by the congregation
96.2	Singing by a choir or soloist
96.2	People greeting each other (by shaking hands or some other way)
74.0	Silent prayer or meditation
100.0	Taking up a collection of money
84.7	Special time directed at children
64.9	Participation by teens (such as speaking, reading, singing, or performing)
6.1	Calling out “amen” or other expressions of approval
25.2	Use of visual projection equipment
90.8	People speaking, reading, or reciting something together
0.8	Jumping, shouting, or dancing that is unplanned
13.0	People raising their hands in praise
42.7	Use of drums or electric guitar
98.5	Communion, Eucharist, or Lord’s Supper

Answer Q44-Q46 next

44. Is there a sermon, homily, or speech of some type in this worship service?

100.0%	Yes
0.0	No ➜ Skip to Q46

45. If yes, how long does the sermon, homily, or speech usually last?

0.0%	5 minutes or less
3.1	6 to 10 minutes
59.5	11 to 15 minutes
33.6	16 to 20 minutes
3.8	21 to 30 minutes
0.0	31 to 60 minutes
0.0	More than an hour

46. In a ***typical week***, how many worship services does your congregation hold?

7.9%	One	38.6	Two
39.4	Three	12.6	Four
0.8	Five	0.8	Six

47. Please list each worship service below and describe each service in terms of number of worshipers, time and date, and type of service.

Worship Service Number:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Percent Reporting this Worship Service	100.0%	92.4%	59.5%	17.6%	4.6%
Service time (Write in starting time)					
Day held (Write in day) Sunday	76.2%	95.8%	78.2%	73.9%	50.0%
Monday	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Wednesday	1.5	1.7	11.5	17.4	16.7
Thursday	1.5	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Friday	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Saturday	20.8	2.5	6.4	4.3	16.7
Holidays Only	0.0	0.0	1.3	4.3	16.7
Average attendance (Write in number of people)	Med.=88 Ave.=87.2	Med..=115 Ave=121.1	Median=100 Ave.=103.7	Median=143 Ave.=119.3	Med. = 50 Ave.=85.5
How often is the service held?					
Every week or nearly every week	100.0%	99.2	93.6	78.3	50.0
Every two weeks	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Once a month	0.0	0.0	2.6	4.3	16.7
Less than once a month	0.0	0.0	3.8	17.4	33.3
What type of service is it? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)					
For children and their parents	73.3	77.7	73.1	52.2	66.7
Communion or Eucharist	86.3	84.3	76.9	55.6	50.0
For youth (13 to 18 years)	46.6	49.6	48.7	43.5	50.0
For non-members or "seekers"	43.5	47.9	46.2	30.4	33.3
Traditional style of worship	53.4	45.5	46.2	39.1	16.7
Contemporary style of worship	27.5	34.7	24.4	47.8	50.0
Blended (both traditional & contemporary) worship	34.4	33.9	30.8	17.4	16.7
Other	3.1	1.7	10.3	4.3	33.3
Which of the following types of music are used regularly in this service? (Mark ***all*** that apply.)					
Traditional hymns	81.7	75.2	73.1	56.5	50.0
Classical music or chorales	36.6	43.0	39.7	30.4	33.3
Responsive psalms	47.3	44.6	44.9	30.4	16.7
Praise music or choruses	47.3	50.4	43.6	34.8	33.3
Contemporary hymns	64.1	68.6	60.3	60.9	66.7
Other contemporary music or songs (not hymns)	30.5	45.5	35.9	43.5	16.7
Music or songs from a variety of cultures	30.5	33.1	30.8	26.1	50.0
Contemplative chants (Taizé, Iona)	9.9	13.2	14.1	17.4	33.3
African-American gospel music	17.6	13.2	15.4	13.0	16.7
Singing in tongues	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No music or songs	1.5	0.8	3.8	0.0	16.7

Most popular times for weekly services:

Sunday: 290 reported services

1.0%	7:45 am & earlier	2.4	10:00 am
17.2	8:00 am	0.3	10:15 am
5.1	8:15 am	14.5	10:30 am
11.0	8:30 am	6.8	10:45 am
2.4	8:45 am	15.2	11:00 am
5.5	9:00 am	2.0	11:15 am
4.5	9:15 am	2.6	5 pm and after
6.2	9:30 am		
2.8	9:45 am		

Saturday: 35 reported services

40.0%	5:00 pm
40.0	5:30 pm
8.6	6:00 pm
2.9	6:30 pm
8.6	7:00 pm

Wednesday: 13 reported services.

23.1%	6:30 pm
23.1	6:45 pm
38.5	7:00 pm
7.7	7:15 pm
7.7	7:30 pm