



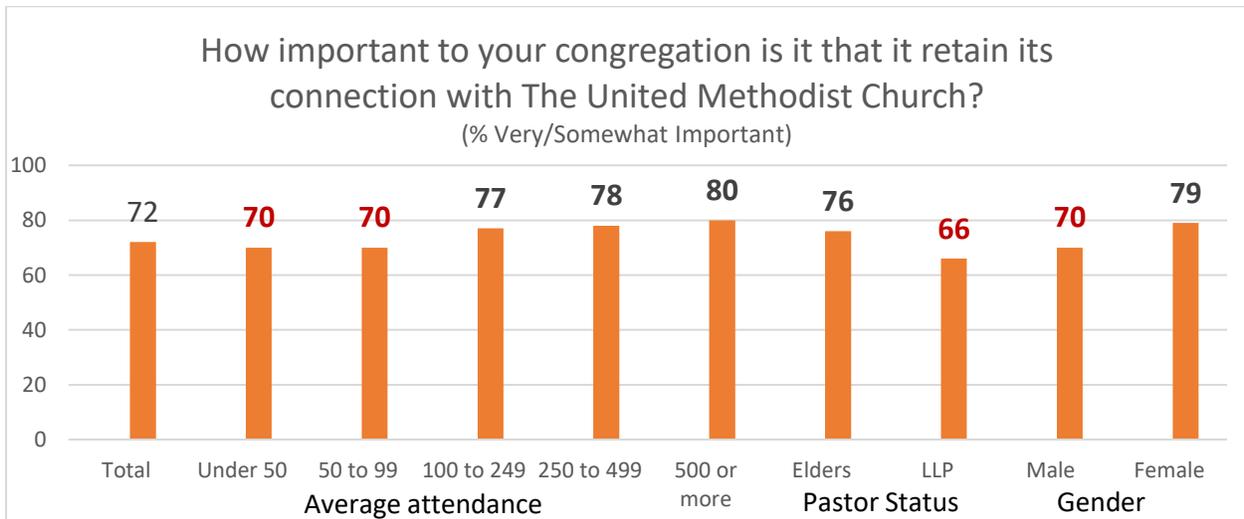
UMC FACT Report – Strength of the United Methodist Connection

Key Findings:

1. Generally, respondents to the survey, typically the pastor, feel it is important for their church to retain a connection to The United Methodist Church; however, most churches do not feel connected to either their Annual Conference or the denomination. This represents a potential threat to the health of the moderate-progressive part of the church in any upcoming split.
2. While half of respondents expect their church to stay with the moderate-progressive church, over a third of churches are “on the fence”, suggesting the denomination has work to do in improving the perception of what the connection provides congregations.

Perceived importance of the Connection:

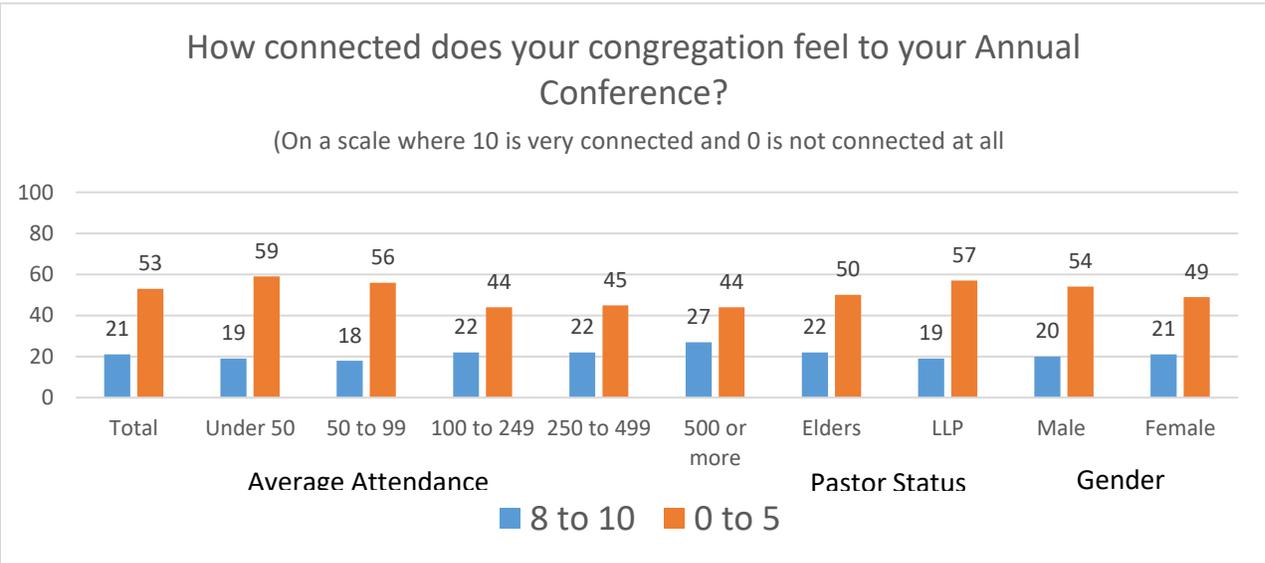
Churches generally consider having and retaining a connection to The United Methodist Church as very or somewhat important. This opinion is particularly strong among larger churches, headed up by elders, and women. Smaller congregations, led by licensed local pastors, perceive the importance to be less.



How connected to the Church does the congregation feel?

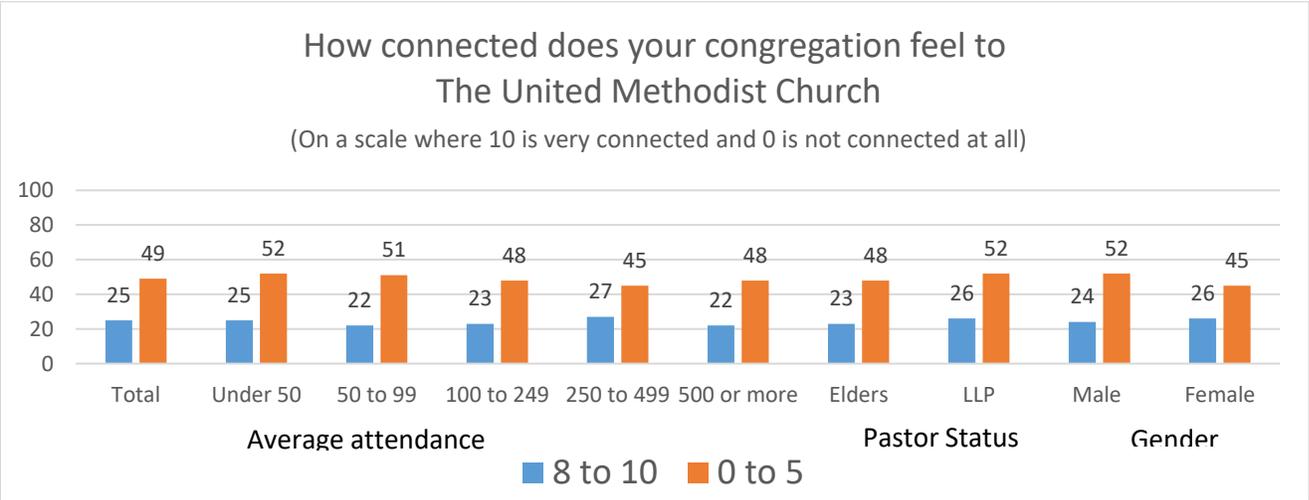
Annual Conference:

While expressing an opinion that retaining a connection with the denomination is important, few churches feel strongly connected with their Annual Conference or The United Methodist Church.



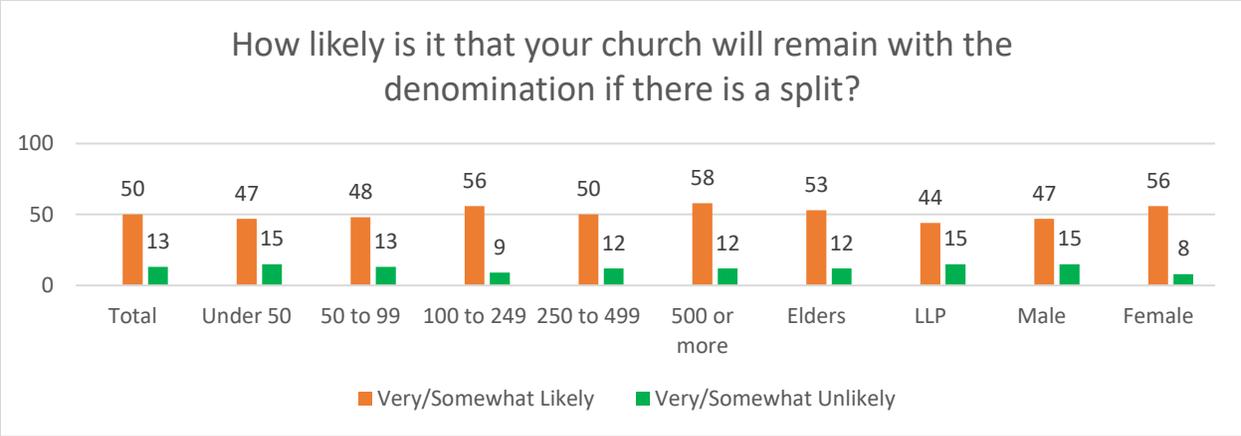
The survey asked respondents to describe their feelings of connection on a “0” to “10” scale. A rating of “10” would indicate that the church feels very connected. “0” would say that the church does not feel connected at all. None of the survey participants rated either the connection with the Annual Conference or the denomination as “10”.

In considering their feelings of connection with the Annual Conference, 53% consider the level of connection as a “0” to “5” with only 21% saying “8” or higher. When asked about the feeling of connection with the denomination, responses are similar with 25% rating the feeling of connection as “8” or higher and 49% “0” to “5”. Churches with more than 100 in average attendance are slightly less negative than respondents from smaller churches in both questions.



If the denomination splits . . .

Half of survey participants predict that their church is likely to stay with the moderate-progressive group if there is a split with only 13% expecting their church to leave. Over one-third are unsure what their church will do.

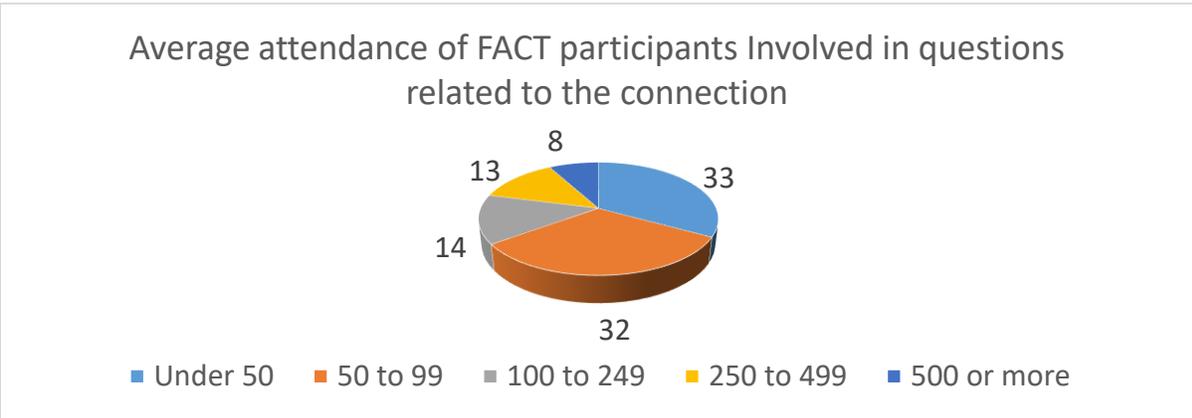


About this Study:

Since 2000, The United Methodist Church has participated every ten years in a joint survey with other religious groups, Christian and non-Christian. The study is coordinated by the Faith Communities Today group (FACT) of which United Methodist Communications is a member.

UMCOM sent the survey to all pastors and church offices in the United Methodist Communications (UMCOM) database, approximately 20,000 in total. The survey was in the field from mid-January to February 9. Data from these questions were not forward to the FACT group and are not included in upcoming reports from that organization.

Approximately 2800 churches responded to the questions referenced in this report. Of the pastors involved in the study, 28% serve more than one church. The survey instructed them to answer for the largest of their congregations only. The size of churches involved in this section of the study are provided below. There is a slight, but expected, under-representation of smaller churches which are part of multi-church charges.



If you have questions about FACT or this report, please contact me at cniedringhaus@umcom.org.