
100 | NWC LEADERS REPORT

SPRING 2018



Presbyterian Mission
Research Services

ABOUT 1001 NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES

Igniting a movement in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to begin 1001 New Worshiping Communities (NWCs) , using new and varied forms of church for our diverse and changing culture, and forming new disciples of Jesus, transforming our denomination, and impacting our world.

1001 new worshiping communities is a movement happening in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Across the PC(USA), God is raising up leaders in churches and presbyteries who are creating new worshiping communities.

They are taking on new and varied forms of church for our changing culture. Primarily they are seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ, to change and transform the world.

In June 2012, the 220th General Assembly declared a commitment to a churchwide movement that results in the creation of 1,001 worshiping communities over the next 10 years. At a grassroots level, hundreds of diverse new worshiping communities have already formed across the nation.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency is coming alongside to fan the flames of this movement, to inspire and equip the wider church to participate in the creation of 1,001 new worshiping communities in the next 10 years.

Since the beginning of the 1001 NWC initiative, 534 new worshiping communities have been raised up across the PC(USA). Of these, 447 (84%) were active during this study.

In 2017, 13 new worshiping communities were formed, and 37 communities closed.



ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This research was conducted in partnership with the 1001 NWC office of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

This study is part of a larger research project tracking the progress of these communities. It includes the third wave of an annual survey of NWC leaders. The goals of this research are to:

1. Determine the level of success of the new worshipping communities and their leaders.
2. Understand the varied expressions of church that are present in new worshipping communities.
3. Learn how these communities are similar to and different from to mainstream congregations.

The survey was sent in March 2018 to 403 leaders for whom we had email addresses. Of these, six reported their community as inactive and 122 returned the survey for a response rate of 32%.

Data on PC(USA) congregations and ministers comes from the Office of the General Assembly's 2017 Session Annual Statistical Report.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

GETTING TO KNOW NWCs

- 89% of NWCs have a regular gathering space and 77% gather at least once a week
- Half of NWCs have 30 or more regular participants
- The top priorities for NWCs are building relationships, worship, and serving others
- 42% of leaders describe their NWC as nontraditional
- 78% of NWC participants were not attending a PC(USA) congregation before participating in a NWC
- 35% of NWC leaders describe their community as unchurched
- 63% report having either a missional, outreach, or justice ministry focus

GETTING TO KNOW NWC PARTICIPANTS

- 30% of leaders report that they are trying to reach a specific racial, ethnic, or immigrant group for their NWC
- 68% of NWC participants are under the age of 45
- The largest age group is 26-45 within NWCs and is over 65 in PC(USA) congregations
- 53% of participants in NWCs and 9% of members of PC(USA) congregations are people of color
- 29% of NWCs and 5% of PC(USA) congregations are racially diverse (i.e., no race comprises more than 79% of its membership)

GETTING TO KNOW NWC LEADERS

- 43% of NWC leaders are paid for their work leading their community
- 23% have a paid full-time job in addition to leading their NWC
- 61% of NWC leaders and 87% of PC(USA) pastors are White
- 35% of NWC leaders were born outside the United States
- 54% of NWC leaders have always been Presbyterian
- 60% of NWC leaders are ordained as PC(USA) ministers and 29% are in their first call
- The most common method of leadership training cited by leaders is attending workshops



GETTING TO KNOW THE NWCS

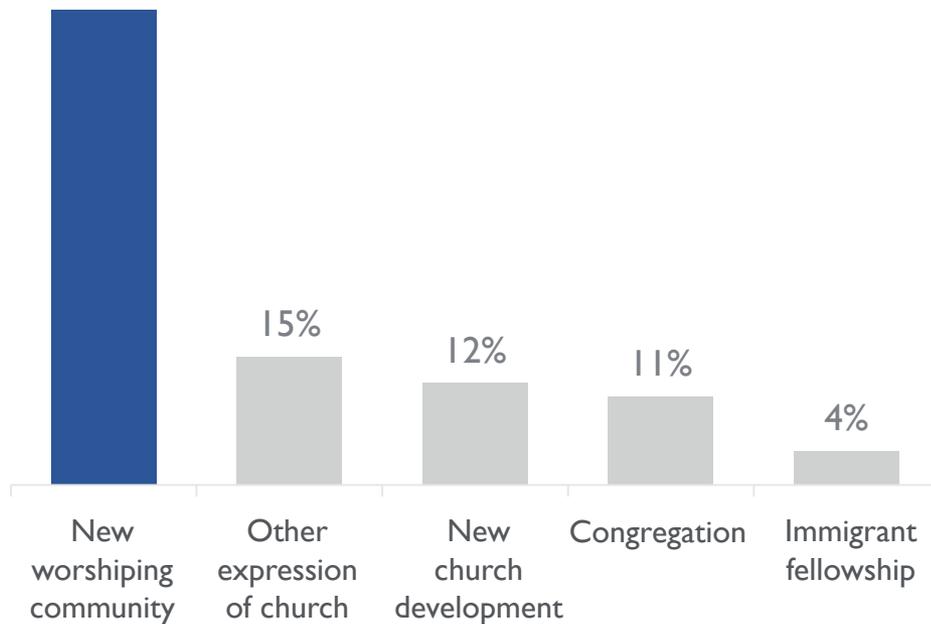
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES? IN THIS SECTION WE COVER TYPES OF COMMUNITIES AND WHAT THEY DO

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” (Matt. 18:20)

TYPES OF COMMUNITIES

The communities tracked by the 1001 office, which are surveyed for this report, include new worshiping communities, immigrant fellowships, new church developments, other expressions of church, and a few recently organized congregations that are still connected to and claimed by 1001.

57% of the communities surveyed identify as a new worshiping community



Other expressions of church:

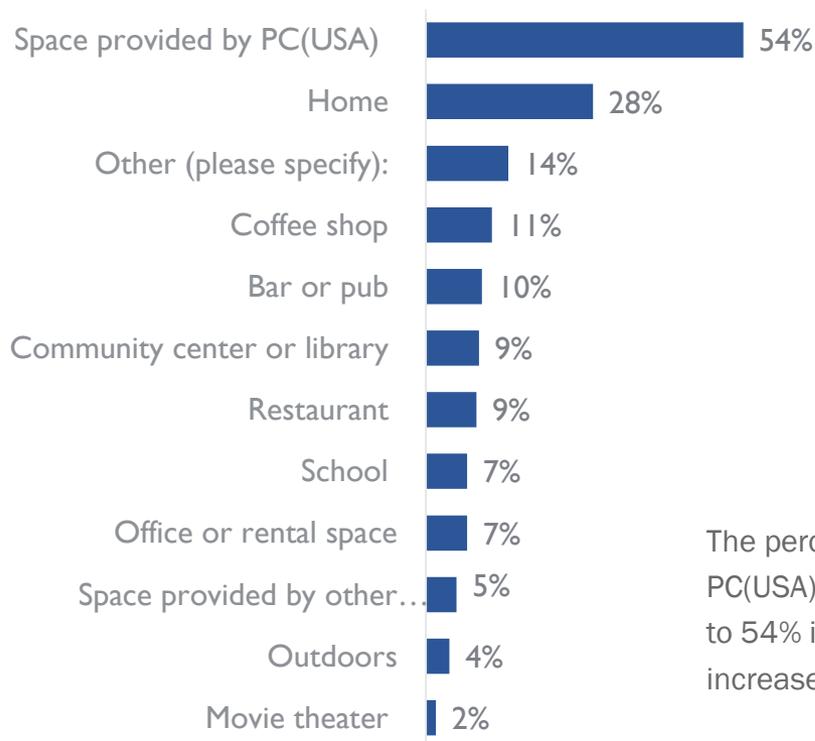
- A School of Love
- Church transformation
- Community center
- Campus ministry
- Collaborative
- Couples in healing together
- Growing out of church and into community
- Mission

WHERE NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES GATHER

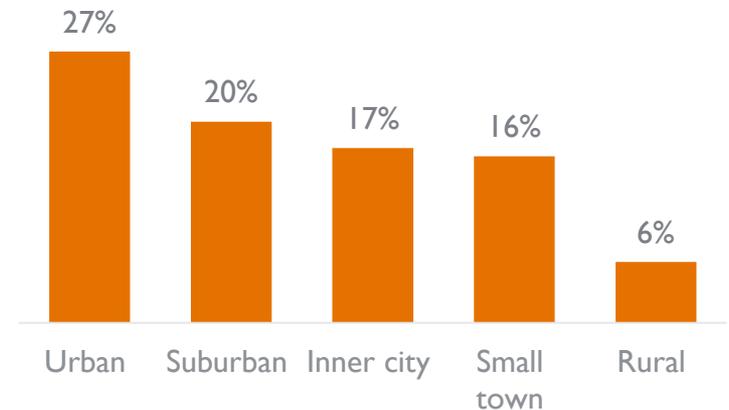
New worshiping communities can be found in many places.

89% of new worshiping communities have a regular gathering place

These gathering spaces include...



The most common place to find a NWC is in an urban setting



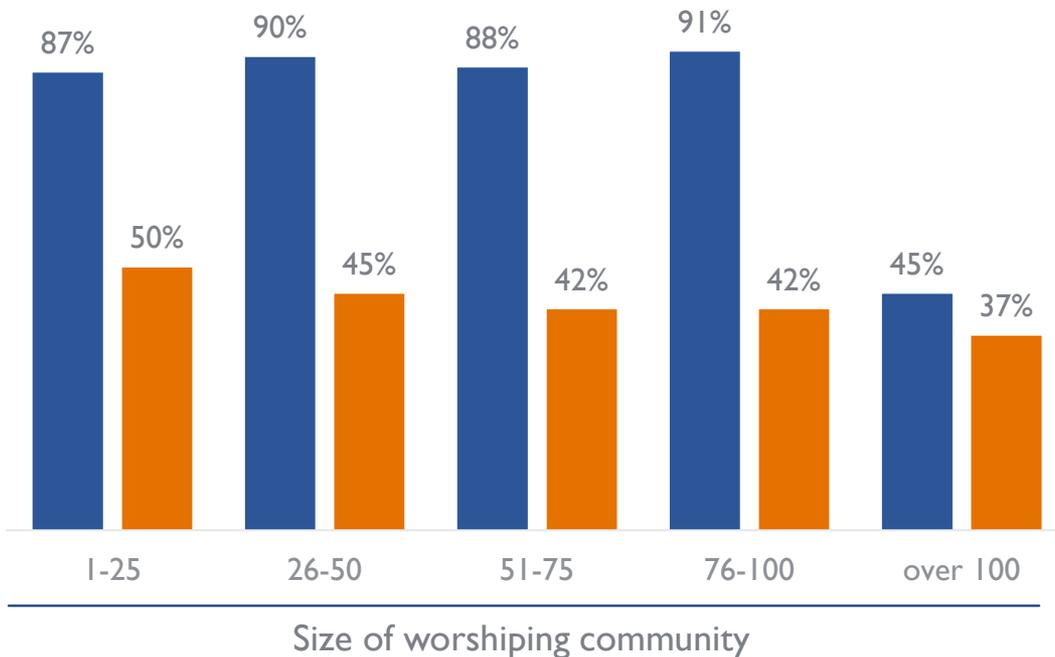
The percentage of NWCs that are gathering in space provided by a PC(USA) congregation or presbytery has increased from 41% in 2016 to 54% in 2018. In addition, the percentage meeting in homes has increased by 7%.

HOW NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES GATHER

New worshiping communities are smaller than PC(USA) congregations.

Half of new worshiping communities have **30** or more regular participants

*Although new **WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES** are smaller than **CONGREGATIONS**, they have a higher percent attendance*



Whereas NWCs range from 1-300 participants with an average of 40, congregations range from 1-8,504 total adherents with an average of 172.

The median size of a new worshiping community is 30, and the median size of a congregation is 82.

New worshiping community gatherings tend to range in size from about 6 to 135 participants, but they can have as many as 600 participants.

HOW NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES GATHER

New worshiping communities are doing more than just worship together.

77% of new worshiping communities gather at least once a week



Here are the top priorities NWC leaders have for their communities

Building relationships	84%
Worship	63%
Serving others	48%
Disciple making	35%
Listening to the community	35%
Evangelism	22%
Spiritual practices	17%
Prayer	13%
Music	6%
Education	6%
Recreation	2%

New worshiping communities are gathering frequently. When they gather, they do many things.

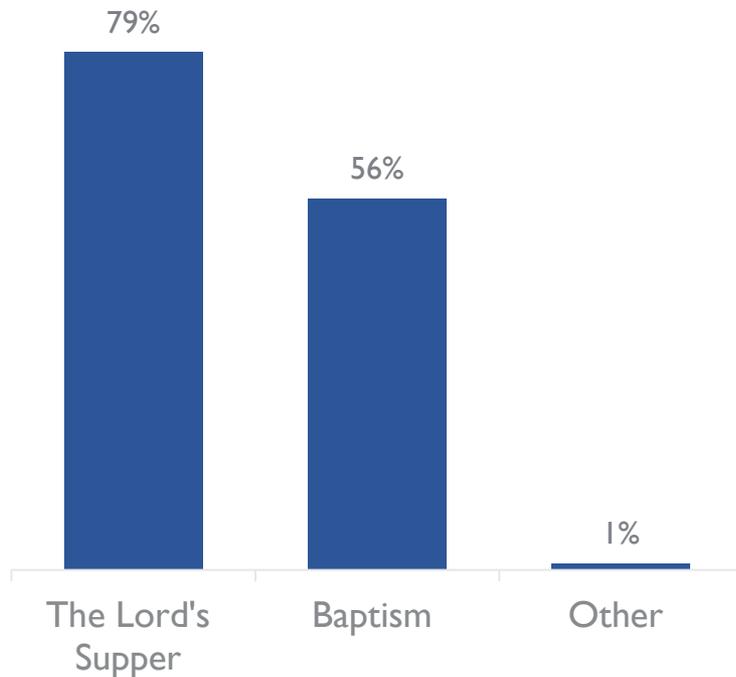
When asked what their priorities for the worshiping community are, the top three listed by leaders are building relationships, worship, and serving others: in short, to love each other and to love God.

Serving others happens in many ways, including sometimes as an official business: 10% of the communities run a business as part of their mission or outreach. These businesses include an anti-racism training organization, a coffee shop, a CrossFit gym, drone piloting, a preschool, and a vegetable garden.

HOLY SACRAMENTS IN NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

New worshipping communities are participating in the sacraments.

81% of new worshipping communities offer sacraments



Sacraments are most often administered by a teaching elder affiliated with the community (68%).

One third of the communities reported that they had at least one baptism in the last year. Just over half of these baptisms were of people over the age of 12. In total, there were 85 baptisms for those 12 and younger, and 105 baptisms of those over the age of 12.

Leaders were asked if there was anything unique or special about how they celebrate the sacraments. Common themes for communion include sharing a meal as a sacrament, including children, and practicing an open table, in which anyone can receive communion. Common themes for baptism include baptisms in nature and full immersion.

The 'other' sacraments leaders listed are children's dedication ceremonies.

NON-TRADITIONAL NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

New worshiping communities are doing new things and doing old things in new ways.

42% of leaders describe their worshiping community as ***nontraditional***

When asked what makes their communities nontraditional, the top themes were:

- ***Conversation instead of sermon***
- ***Eating meals as part of worship***
- ***Creativity and the arts included in worship***
- ***Non-traditional venues or times***
- ***Intentionally multicultural***
- ***Lack of liturgy or alternative liturgy***

“Worship occurs outdoors when possible and locations vary. Worship style is multi sensory using sidewalk chalk, bubbles, drumming, arts and other activities. Preaching is replaced by group sharing and reflection. Scripture readings are often paired with readings from other literary sources.”

“We are intentionally interracial and cross cultural. We form community around a shared meal and a question that arises out of our reading of scripture. We listen to each other and work to become friends.”

“We don't preach, rather we have an extended time of teaching and discussion or we engage in a spiritual practice together. Monthly we host community conversation nights to invite spiritually curious people into a discussion on culturally relevant topics that are often justice oriented.”

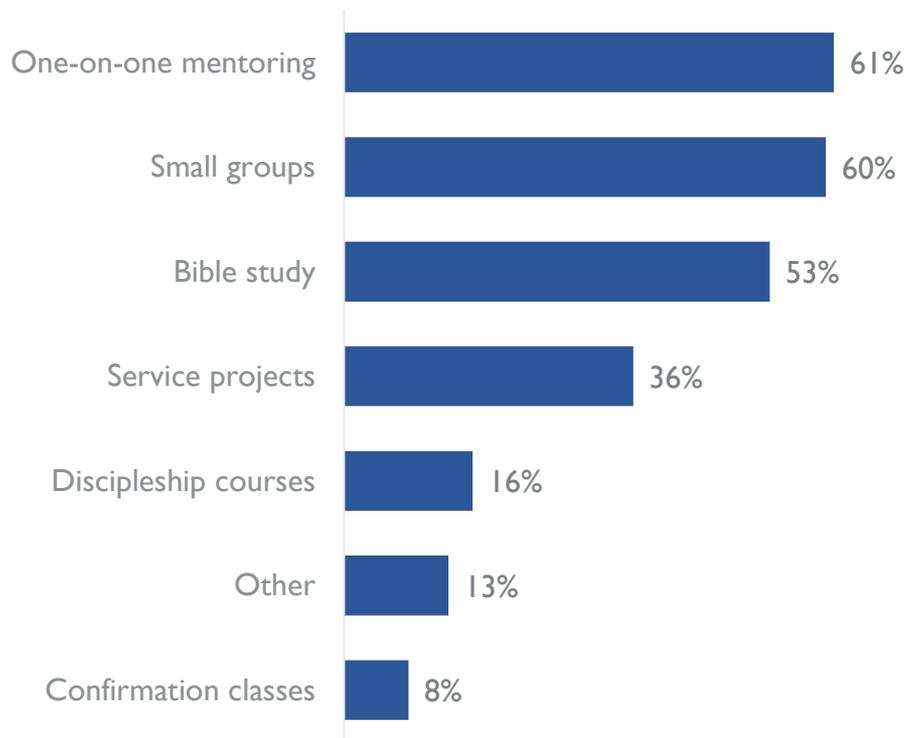
“We have done worship through poetry, drawing, crafting, and communal prayers and discussions.”

CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND DISCIPLE MAKING

Participants in new worshiping communities are being led in their faith development.

91% of new worshiping community leaders disciple participants in their community

Methods of discipleship include...



The top method of discipling cited by leaders is one-on-one mentoring. There is one significant change from the 2016 survey to this one: whereas 71% of leaders cited Bible study as a method of discipleship before, only 53% cite it now. This could have to do with a shift in approach towards targeting the unchurched, which is a large target demographic for many leaders, and might be initially adverse to Bible study.

Other methods leaders wrote in include:

- *Community engagement*
- *Spiritual disciplines*
- *Focus on relationships*
- *Virtual communities*
- *Membership class*
- *Contemplative circles*

CHRISTIAN FORMATION AND DISCIPLE MAKING

New worshiping communities serve people in various stages of their Christian formation.

78% of NWC participants were NOT attending a PC(USA) congregation before participating in a worshiping community

Participant backgrounds include...



35%

of new worshiping community leaders describe their community as ***unchurched***

33%

of new worshiping community leaders say that the people in their community think of themselves as Presbyterian

65%

of new worshiping community leaders think of their worshiping community as Presbyterian

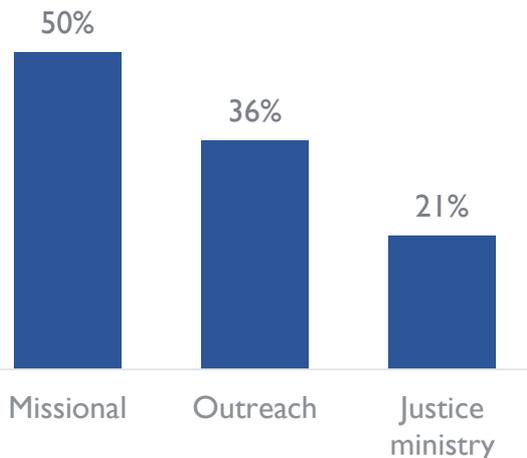
BREAKING OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH

New worshiping communities are being Jesus out in the world.

63% of new worshiping communities report having either a missional, outreach, or justice ministry focus

NWCs that do not focus on these things still do them—and they do not work alone, either. The vast majority (90%) of new worshiping communities work together with other community organizations and agencies.

Percentage of NWCs reporting missional, outreach, or justice ministry as a focus



Ways of working with other organizations include:

Ecumenical activities	42%
Providing food and shelter	42%
Justice	39%
Education	38%
Children's activities	36%
Arts	29%
Environment	19%
Sports activities	17%
Healthcare	12%
HIV/AIDS support networks	4%
Other:	26%

Specific work being done includes:

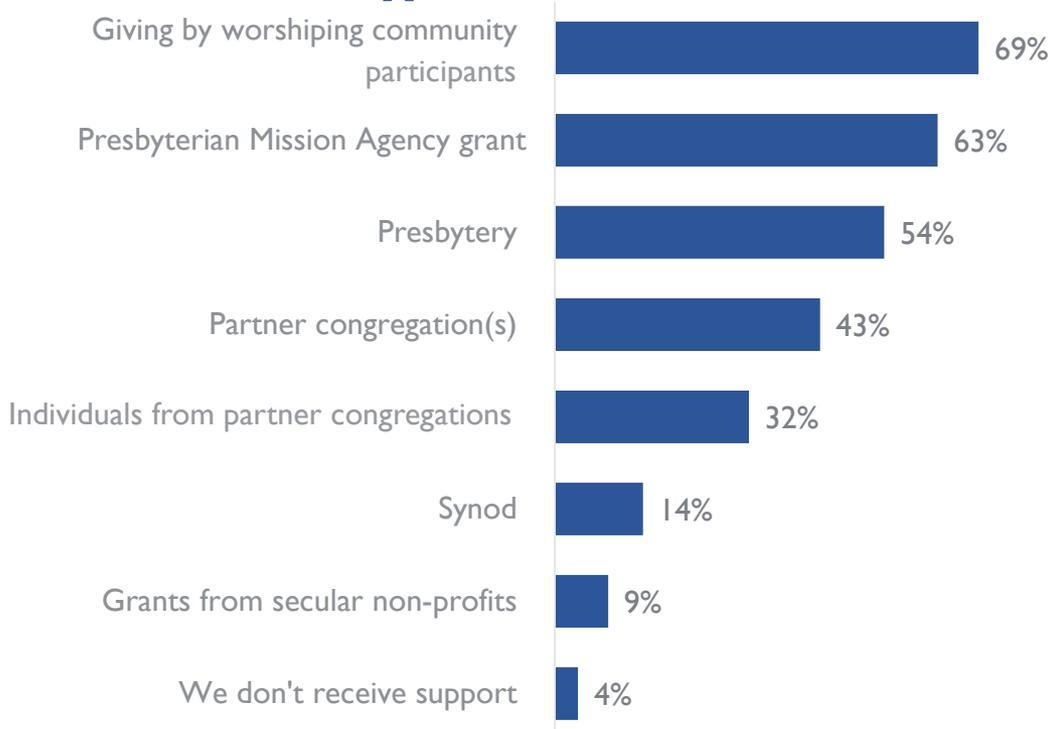
- Citizen re-entry programs
- Community farms
- Habitat for Humanity
- Helping at-risk teens
- Homeless advocacy
- Hurricane relief
- LGBTQ groups
- Political organizing
- Recovery groups
- Refugee support

NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES ARE CONNECTIONAL

New worshiping communities are not operating without help. They derive support from partner congregations, their presbytery, and community organizations.

75% of new worshiping communities report having at least one partner congregation

Sources of support include...



NWCs are generally operating with at least some outside support, and most receive support from more than one source. Among these forms of support, the most common is self-support: 69% of NWCs receive financial support from their participants.

In addition, 75% have a partner congregation; however, it is worth noting that only 85% of the leaders who have a partner congregation identify it as a source of support, financially or otherwise.

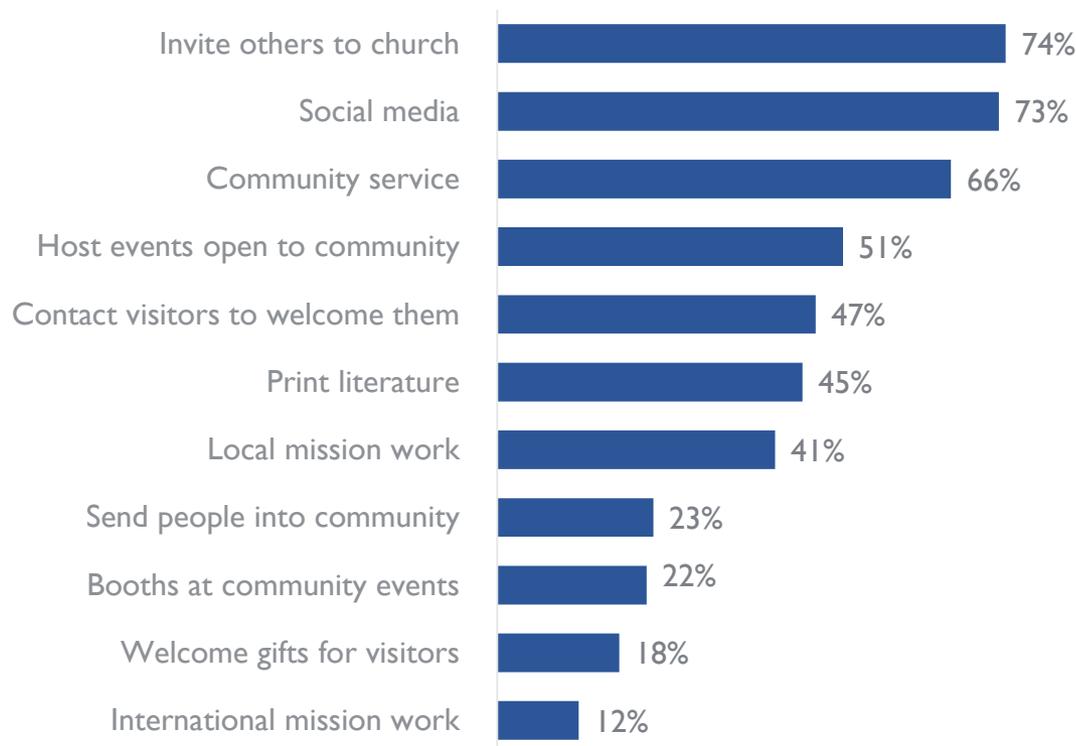
Despite this, 76% of NWCs have someone providing oversight or accountability; the most common are a designated committee of the presbytery (32%) or the session or committee of a partner congregation (27%). In addition, 3% cite local community organizations that hold them accountable.

NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES ARE EVANGELIZING

New worshiping communities are intentionally sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

97% of new worshiping communities engage in some form of evangelism

Methods of evangelism include...



The top method of evangelism is for participants to invite others to come with them to their community worship or other events. This is followed closely by engaging people on social media.

Some other things to note from this chart: social media is more prevalent than the use of print literature, and community service is more prevalent than hosting event open to the community. Local mission work is also more common than international mission work.

Also, less than half of NWCs follow up with visitors to their worshiping community.



NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

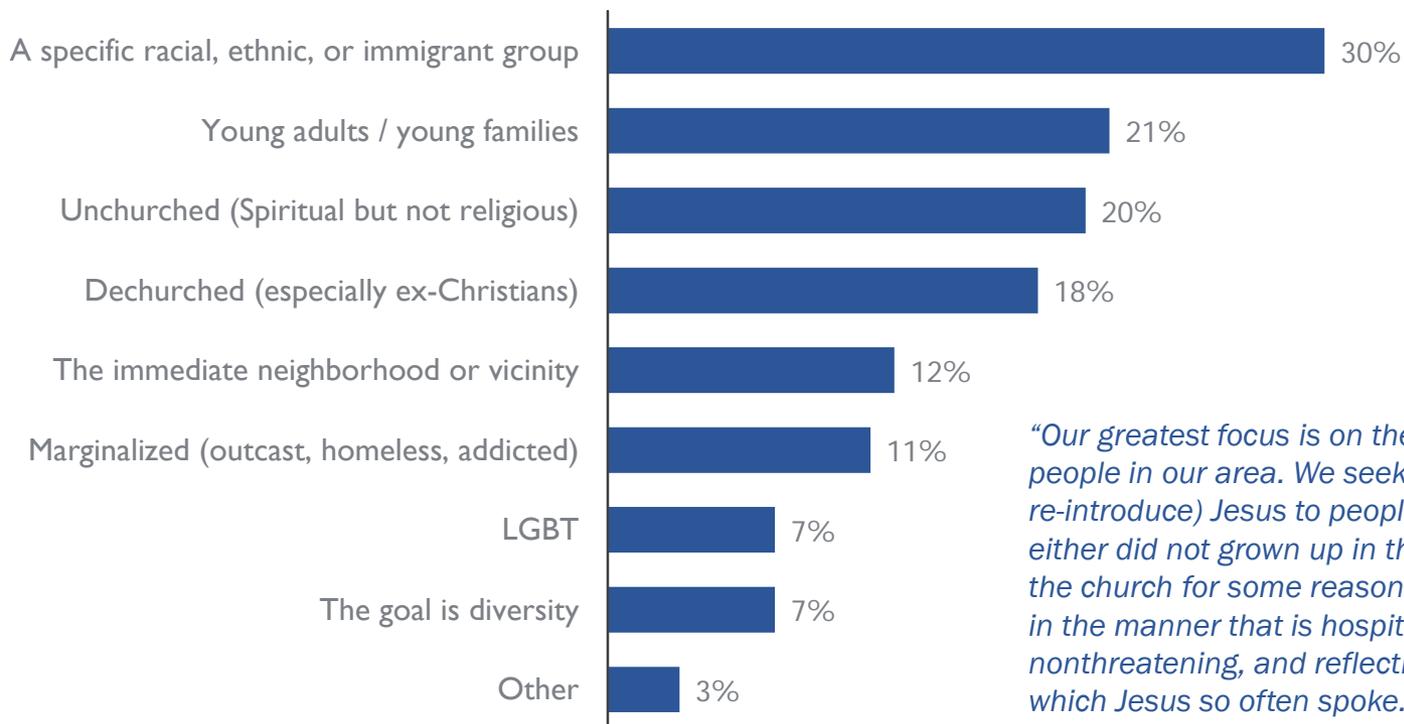
WHO WORSHIPS IN NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES? IN THIS SECTION
WE COVER DEMOGRAPHICS OF NWC PARTICIPANTS

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” (1 Cor. 12:27)

NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

In the survey, we asked this question of the leaders, giving them a chance to tell us their target population in their own words. In all, 82 leaders responded to this question. We were able to organize those answers into 8 categories.

*Do you have a particular **POPULATION** that you are trying to reach to be a part of your **COMMUNITY**?*



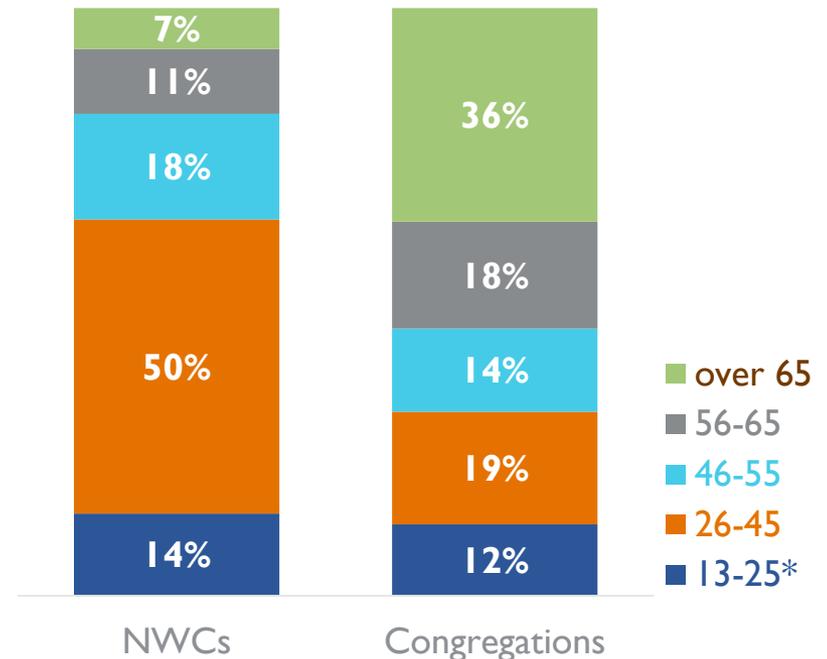
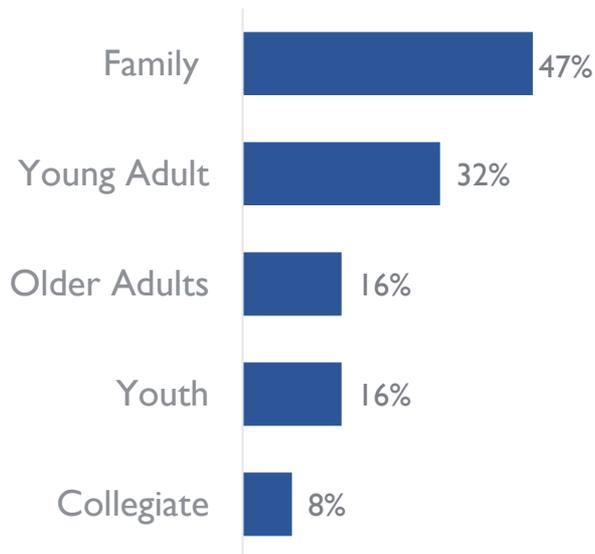
“Our greatest focus is on the ‘unchurched’ people in our area. We seek to introduce (or re-introduce) Jesus to people in our area who either did not grow up in the church or left the church for some reason. We seek to do so in the manner that is hospitable, nonthreatening, and reflecting the love of which Jesus so often spoke.”

NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

NWC participants tend to be younger than PC(USA) members as a whole.

68% of new worshipping community participants are under the age of 45

Percent of NWCs with an age group focus:

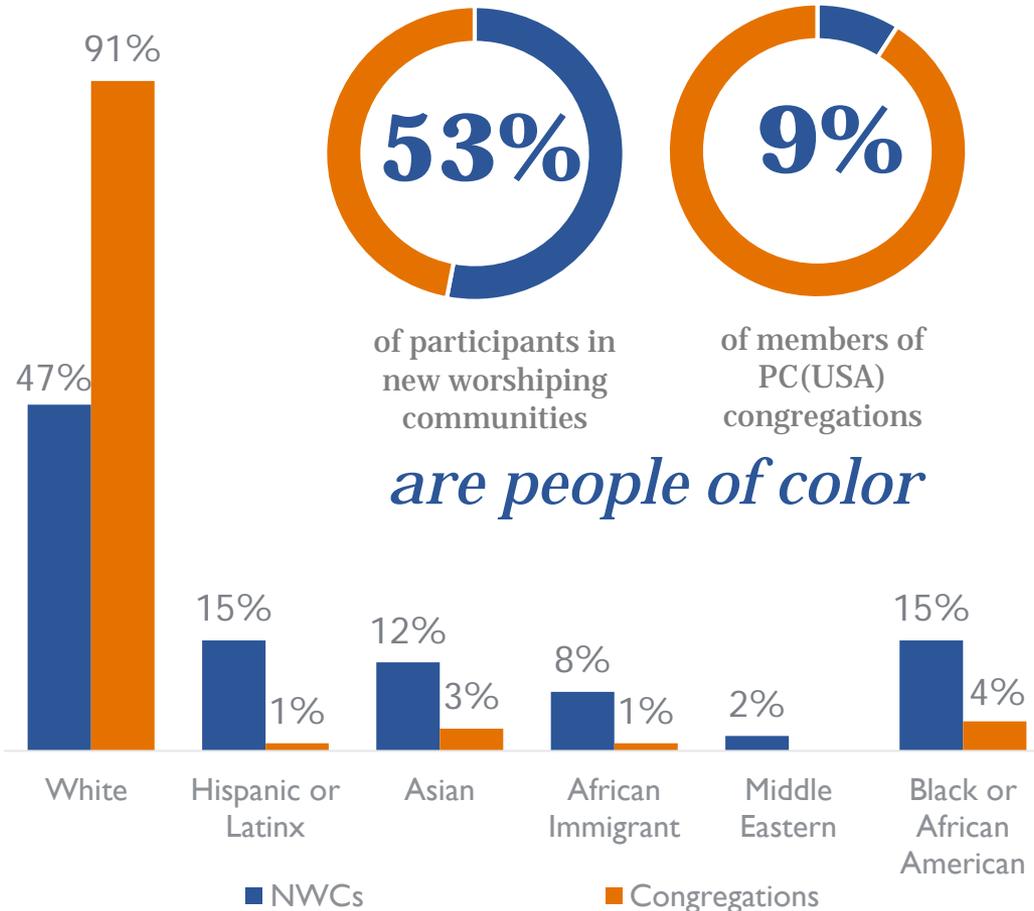


The largest age group in PC(USA) congregations is over 65. In contrast, the largest age group within NWCs is 26-45. This indicates that NWCs are attracting younger participants.

* Since membership in PC(USA) is typically limited to those who have completed confirmation, which is usually in 8th grade, when most children are 13-14, analysis of new worshipping community participant age has been limited to those 13 and above. The 68% statistic includes the 11% of worshipping community participants under the age of 13.

NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

NWC participants are a more racially diverse group than PC(USA) members.



The racial demographics of participants PC(USA) congregations have remained stable in the last year. And, although this survey reports a double in Black or African American new worshipping community participants, a closer examination of the data shows it is due to older, larger, majority Black NWCs reporting this year for the first time.

In addition to having more overall diversity, NWCs are also more likely to have a diverse membership within any given community. Only 5% of PC(USA) congregations have no single race comprising more than 79% of its membership. In contrast, 29% of NWCs are racially diverse in this way. This is up from 22% in 2016, and cannot be explained by older, multiracial worshipping communities reporting for the first time.



GETTING TO KNOW THE LEADERS

WHO IS LEADING NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES? IN THIS SECTION WE COVER DEMOGRAPHICS, STATUS IN THE PC(USA), AND TRAINING

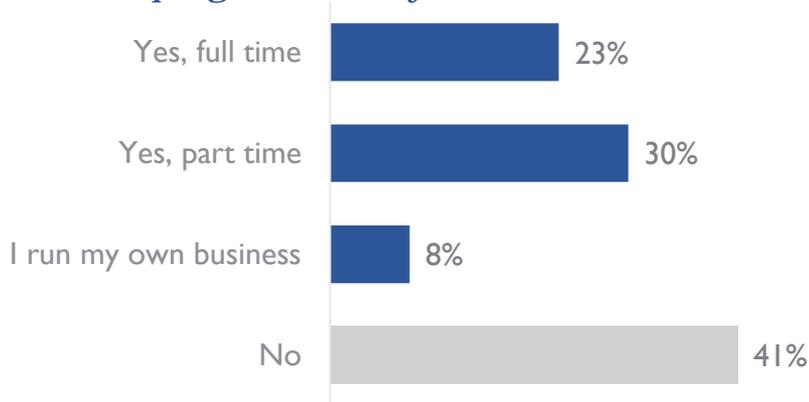
“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” (Luke 10:2)

NEW WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY LEADERS

New worshiping leaders work hard for their communities.

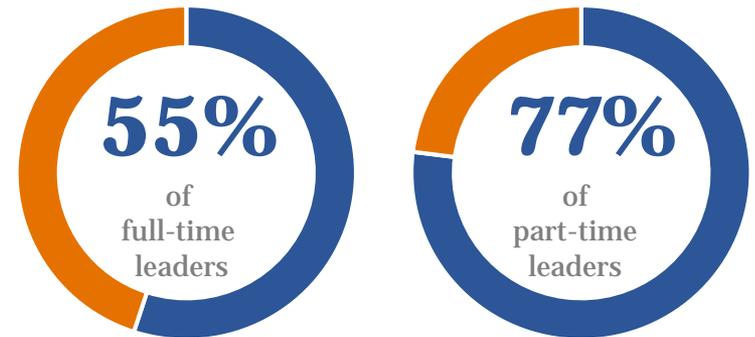
43% of new worshiping community leaders are paid for their work leading their community

Do you have a paid job in addition to leading the worshiping community?



93% of NWC leaders have some form of health insurance. The most common source of insurance is Board of Pensions (42%). In addition, 17% are covered by their spouse, 12% by their other job, 9% are self-insured, 4% are on Medicare or Medicaid, and 2% are covered by their partner church.

Almost half (47%) consider their time commitment to their worshiping community to be at least full-time. However, those who work full-time are less likely than part-timers to be paid for their work.



are paid to be a new worshiping community leader

DEMOGRAPHICS

New worshiping community leaders are more racially diverse than PC(USA) pastors.



In our study, 61% of NWC leaders identify as White, compared to 87% of leaders* of PC(USA) congregations. Among NWC pastors of color:

15% identify as Hispanic or Latinx

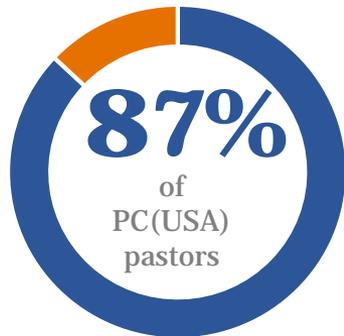
13% as Asian

9% as Black or African American

5% as African Immigrant

1% as Middle Eastern

1% as some other race



are White

Also, 35% of the leaders were born outside the United States. The most commonly mentioned country is Brazil, from which three (3%) of the respondents come. In addition, NWC leaders hail from Canada, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Puerto Rico, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Togo, and United Kingdom.

Although these leaders are more racially and culturally diverse, there is no gender difference between NWC leaders and PC(USA) pastors. Women are just as likely to be a NWC leader as a pastor: 31% of the NWC leaders and 34% of PC(USA) pastors are female.

*anyone leading a PC(USA) congregation, regardless of ordination status, retirement status, or denominational affiliation

DEMOGRAPHICS

Although most new worshiping community leaders are cradle Presbyterians, this demographic may be shifting.

54% of new worshiping community leaders have always been Presbyterian. This is down from 2016, when 63% reported being born Presbyterian.

When asked why they became Presbyterian, many discuss the pull of PC(USA)'s theology and its focus on inclusion.

We were looking for more expansive expression of Christian faith...the Reformed tenets of the faith have been personally healing for me, theologically

I chose to join the PCUSA because they represented the best model (so far) of my understanding of Christian community: the priesthood of believers, the unity of the Body, inclusion and diversity, etc..

Presbyterian polity and form of government, specifically the prioritization of discernment of the body.

Because this 1001 NWC movement best fits what we need from people who are called to ministry today - not the institutional model of church.

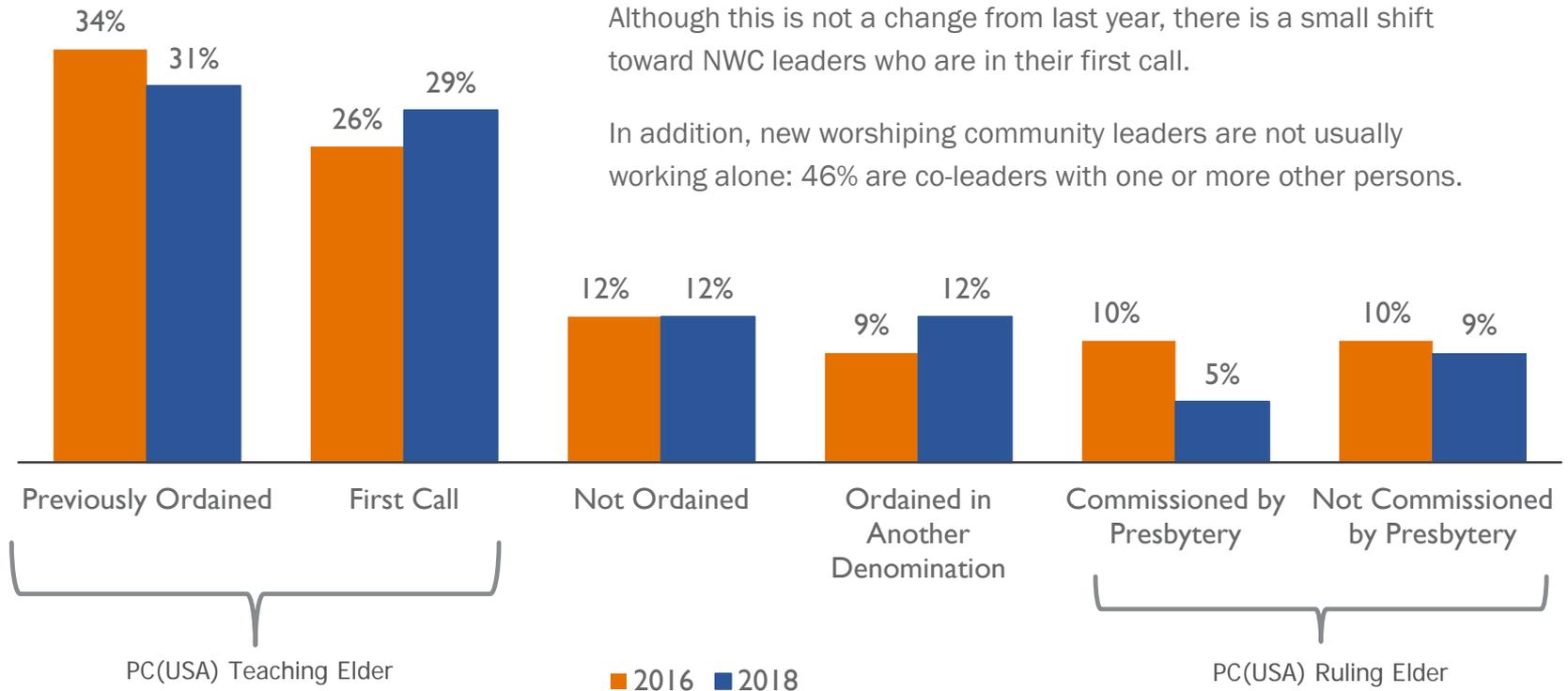
I needed to peacefully part ways with the denomination that raised me in order to be faithful to my calling and vocation. I had relationships with awesome folks in the PCUSA who introduced me to the 1001 movement. It was a beautiful, gospel-mission centered partnership. The rest is God's providential grace & up to God's future.

the theology of God's grace as the initiator

DEMOGRAPHICS

New worshiping community leaders become leaders in many different ways

60% of new worshiping community leaders are ordained as PC(USA) ministers.



LEADERSHIP TRAINING

New worshiping community leaders are being trained to lead their communities.

Leadership Training	Have done	In progress	Have not done
1001 conference	36%	4%	59%
Apprenticeship or residency	17%	5%	78%
Coaching	50%	31%	19%
Commissioned Ruling Elder training	15%	4%	82%
Discerning Missional Leadership assessment	51%	6%	43%
Online course	32%	3%	64%
Workshops	59%	4%	36%

Research Services helps the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) make data-informed decisions through the use of surveys, focus groups and interviews, demographic analysis, and program evaluations.

We are social scientists with backgrounds in sociology, public policy, and economics. We serve congregations, presbyteries and synods, PC(USA) national agencies, and other PC(USA)-related organizations. Research Services is a ministry of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of this report, contact us at 502-569-5077 or research@pcusa.org.



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