

Project 20/20

Planning Islington United Church's Future

Planning Team's Recommendations
January 6, 2008

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Appendix One: Membership of Project 20/20 Task Force

Appendix Two: Congregational Survey (Final Report)

Just a Typical Day

It was a typical April day and as usual, temperatures were in the high 20's. The world was reeling over the latest pronouncements of nuclear status by Argentina as billions picked up the news on their morning net-link. It was a sunny day and the solar panels on the roof were humming generating electricity for the church with offset links to low income neighbourhood housing and satellite missions. A teacher had resigned last week from Islington's Christian Daycare program much to the chagrin of the Faith Formation Minister. Still the Food Bank expansion program had been a success and a family had just arrived from Darfur to begin their new life thanks to the Refugee Support Group. The church website had received 8,245 hits last week and 2,395 had downloaded last week's sermon.

The northwest atrium sparkled off the narthex peppered with lush vegetation as a young, unshaved man talked in whispers to an Islington Spiritual Councillor. Another sat silently on the off-white sofa waiting for the first of three alternative Sunday worship services with additional options of two seminars, a discussion group and a coffee hour. He sipped his cappuccino from the church coffee bar, answered his cell phone through the church's net and noticed a young Shepherd with her white ribbon looking his way.

Young families, mature couples, teens and seniors streamed through the church doors filling the Sanctuary. Today, over 1,500 people would come to Islington's complementary worship services to celebrate Christ in their life. Another 200 would watch on the Internet.

It was 9:15 in the morning and Christ was in the air. The church was vibrant, meaningful and relevant...a promise kept...just an ordinary Sunday...like any other day in April...2020.

Project 20/20: Planning Islington United Church's Future Planning Team's Recommendations

1.0 Introduction

In the fall of 1994, Islington United Church launched a comprehensive assessment of its mission and vision. As a result a visioning action plan was developed for our church over the course of a two year period (We Have a Dream Report, 1996). The 1996 Visioning report was ground breaking and energizing resulting in a plethora of new initiatives including the emergence of the Church Council, the development of our Ministry Team, the Polaris Campaign and the introduction of several new pastoral care programs, music programs and social justice initiatives.

Almost 12 years have passed since Islington United Church last reviewed its mission and vision imperatives to determine whether we are faithfully utilizing our resources in a manner consistent with the evolving needs of our congregation, the surrounding mission field and the broader community. To address this need, the Executive Council launched an initiative to review our current mission, programs and organizational structure in order to assess whether they were properly aligned for the future. This review was intended to solicit input from all members of the church and develop a roadmap to provide direction for the next 12 years. The initiative was manifested as Project 20/20, an undertaking to chart Islington United Church's course into the future.

Project 20/20 consisted of seven groups composed of representatives of the Ministerial Team, other staff members and members from the congregation:

1. The Oversight Team – to launch the project and review its progress
2. The Planning Team – to collection and analyze information and distil this information into a series of actionable recommendations
3. The Worship and Music Ministry Team – to review Islington United's current worship services and music program to identify future initiatives in this area
4. The Pastoral Care Ministry Team – To review Islington United's pastoral care programs and initiatives and recommend areas for growth
5. The Faith Formation Ministry Team – To review Islington United Christian education programs and determine our course in this area
6. The Mission and Outreach Ministry Team – To review Islington United social justice programs and make recommendations for future imperatives
7. The Congregational Development Ministry Team – To review Islington United Church's current initiatives to attract new members to our church and make recommendations has to how our church could evolve in this area.

To supplement the work of these teams, Project 20/20 included a congregational survey to reach out to all members and visitors to our church, and a series of Listening Circles, moderated by members of the Ministry Teams, to allow more in-depth discussion of the issues.

This report reviews what the Planning Team has learned and what we believe it means concerning the evolutionary course for our church. Examining possible ways to reinvent a church such as Islington United is clearly an awesome responsibility and an honour. Reinventing a church that will work 12 years from now is simply daunting. Yet we are comforted by our belief that Christ has been at our side throughout this process. In the end, the Planning Team concluded that our mission was to show the world that surrounds us that Christ loves us and his ways still have meaning. In the end, it was all about fostering a Christ-movement within our community.

2.0 Resources Consulted in the Project 20/20 Planning Process

The recommendations advanced in this report represent the collective thoughts of many individuals. The Planning Team expresses its heartfelt thanks for the dedication, hard work, enthusiasm and creativity provided by so many who have helped to shape our recommended path over the next 12 years. As of 2008, Islington United is a strong and vibrant Christ-centered community. The combined efforts of so many offers hope that this will also be the case in the year 2020.

The following is a chronological list of resources reviewed during our journey:

1. The Bible
2. Bill Easum Report (1994)
3. Islington United Church's We Have a Dream Report (Brian Ovenell, 1996)
4. Making Room (Brian Ovenell, 2002)
5. Making Room (Jan Wood Daly, 2006)
6. Islington United Oversight Team Strategic Planning Process: Guidance to the Ministry Teams (Aug. 15, 2007)
7. Analysis of Islington United Contributions and Membership Trends (Sept. 2007)
8. Emerging Spirit Program and Campaign (Rob Dalglish, Sept. 25, 2007)
9. Social Landscape Background Material (David Lang, Sept. 25, 2007)
10. Interview with Toronto Volunteer Services (Joan Hunter, Sept. 26, 2007)
11. City of Toronto Official Plan: Etobicoke Central (Joan Hunter, Sept. 26, 2007)
12. Interview with Rev. Mark Aitchison, Senior Minister (Oct. 4, 2007)
13. Interview with John Leavitt, Chair of Church Council (Oct. 4, 2007)
14. Interview with Wendy Sexsmith, Co-Chair of Ministry & Personnel Committee (Oct. 4, 2007)
15. Interviews with Leslie Arsenault, Church School Coordinator, Dr. John Derksen Minister of Music, Rev. Cathy Dilts, Minister of Congregational Development, Michael Shewburg, Minister to Youth, Rev. Linda Wheler, Minister of Pastoral Care and Sexton staff (Oct. 2007)
16. Legacy of Faith Program - Interview with Carole Bennett, Stewardship & Church Administrator (Oct. 11, 2007)
17. The Environics Analytics Congregational Research Project (Oct. 16, 2007)
18. Stewardship and Resources – Interview with Debbie Stephens, Chair, Loaves & Fishes Committee (Oct. 17, 2007)
19. God and Guinness Group Session Report (Oct. 30, 2007)
20. Seekers Youth Group Session Report (Nov. 1, 2007)
21. Worship and Music Ministry Team Report (Oct. 30, 2007)

22. Pastoral Care Ministry Team Report (Nov. 7, 2007)
23. Faith Formation Ministry Team Report (Nov. 7, 2007)
24. Men's Day Apart Project 20/20 Visioning Report (Ted Wilson, Nov. 7, 2007)
25. Mission and Outreach Ministry Team Report (Nov. 15, 2007)
26. Congregational Development Ministry Team Report (Nov. 15, 2007)
27. Congregational Survey Results (Final Report, Dec. 16, 2007)

The Project 20/20 Planning Team wishes to make special mention of the strong guidance and spiritual leadership provided by Rev. Rob Dalgleish of the United Church of Canada. Rev. Dalgleish's leadership and insightfulness have been crucial over the course of the last six months and he has played a significant role in the development of our recommendations and this report. Thank you Rob, for your tireless efforts and dedication.

3.0 Islington United Church: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

As part of the planning process, all teams were asked to conduct a SWOT analysis, a process which involves assessing our church's strengths (i.e., where we believe we are currently strong), weaknesses (i.e., where we believe we need to improve), opportunities (i.e., circumstances and factors which we may be able to capitalize upon in the future) and threats (i.e., circumstances and factors which may impair our ability to achieve our mission and vision). This report begins with a consolidated assessment of SWOT analyses conducted by the various teams that were part of Project 20/20. This is intended to provide a context as to "where we are today".

3.1 Celebrating Our Strengths

Islington United is indeed blessed with an abundance of resources. It is therefore not a surprise that our Ministry Teams and the Planning Team identified a long list of strengths. These strengths may be summarized into twelve main themes (note: the items are presented in no particular order):

1. **Our Ministerial Team** is among the most consistently mentioned strength. Our Ministerial Team is considered "dedicated", "experienced", "resourceful", "talented", "inspirational", "creative" and "approachable". Clearly we are fortunate that this talented group of thoughtful individuals have helped us on our spiritual journey over the course of the last 12 years.
2. **Our Congregation** is also considered a strength and thought of as "friendly", "open-minded", "willing to change", "committed", "spiritual", "connected" and, one of the largest United Church congregations in Canada.
3. **Our Lay Leaders** are thought to be "dedicated", "hardworking", "smart", "talented" and at times, "visionary".
4. **Our Worship Services** are well received by those who currently attend our church. The Congregational Survey shows that "our congregation deeply connects with current worship service." Mark Aitchison's sermons were especially referred to as "inspirational." Our special worship services (Blue Christmas, Maundy Thursday, Christmas, Easter, McCall Wing Services, Healing Ministry) are also considered strengths of our church.

5. **Our Music Program** is considered by many to be among the best in the city and a strong aspect of our Sunday worship services and youth program.
6. **Hospitality** was consistently identified as one activity we do very well and especially between services and on special occasions.
7. **Our Pastoral Care Programs**, (e.g., Stephen Ministry), for the most part, are considered to be operating well and touching so many lives...it is clearly one of the strengths of our church.
8. **Our Diversity of Spiritual Experiences** (e.g., Week of Guided Prayer, Men's and Women's Day Apart) are also considered one of our strengths as is our ability to offer the sacraments (Baptism, Communion, Confirmation) and pastoral liturgies to our congregation and the broader community.
9. **Our Diversity of Programs**: Islington United offers a broad-range of programs to our congregation with recent growth in our youth programs complementing the many programs for more mature members of our congregation.
10. **Our Social Justice Initiatives**: Our growing list of social justice initiatives (e.g., Refugee Support Ministry; English Conversation; Emergency Food Pantry, Christmas Project, Mabelle Food Program, Homework Club, GO Project) are considered by many to be an emerging strength of our church.
11. **Our Church Building and Facilities**: We are blessed with a large, signature building with several facilities (e.g., kitchens, gym, classrooms, library).
12. **Our Community and Our Country**: We live in a stable community with excellent infra-structure and transportation systems in a peace-loving, modern, country which is the envy of the world. The political stability of our country and its vast wealth provides an ideal environment in which to undertake new missions in the name of Christ.

3.2 Recognizing Our Challenges

While we are indeed blessed, the Project 20/20 Teams were mindful that there are many aspects of Islington United that represent weaknesses or ways in which we can improve as a church. The following 15 themes capture the common weaknesses identified by the Project 20/20 Teams in their SWOT analyses (note: the items are presented in no particular order):

1. **Our Aging Congregation**: Several teams acknowledged the fact that we have an aging congregation or lack members from "*Generation X*" (i.e., those born between 1963 and 1981 and currently 24 to 46 years old) and the "*Echo-Boomers*" (i.e., those born after 1982 and currently 23 and younger). Some expressed concern over who would carry on the good work of our church in the future.
2. **Our Inability to Attract Younger Generations**: A related concern is our apparent inability to attract members from younger generations.
3. **Our Sunday School**: Despite the diligent and concerted efforts of many, we have a chronic shortage of qualified volunteer Sunday School teachers which prevents us from offering the quality of Christian education that will be essential to attract young families to our church. This problem is systemic and clearly a liability. The Planning Team considers this a most urgent and serious problem.

4. **Declining Membership:** There was also a concern expressed regarding the decline in membership at Islington United Church. There has been a 22 percent decline in the number of identifiable donor households since 1992. However, it should be noted that this decline primarily occurred between 1999 and 2003 and that the number of identifiable donor households has remained constant during the last four years. Moreover, the amount contributed by each donor household has steadily increased over this period more than offsetting the decline in members.
5. **Our Current Budget Deficit:** Traditionally, Islington United Church has operated with a balanced budget. However, a relatively rapid increase in expenses in recent times has exceeded our revenues resulting in a deficit that is estimated to be approximately 6.5 percent of our total budget. This is a concern to some in our congregation, and especially more senior, long-term members on fixed incomes.
6. **Donor Fatigue:** Some members of the Project Teams expressed concern over the possibility of donor fatigue. While this was not evident in the congregational survey, the Planning Team remains sensitive to this possibility.
7. **Volunteer Fatigue:** As with most volunteer organizations in Canada, the majority of the volunteer work within our church is undertaken by a relatively small portion of our congregation. The 80/20 rule (where 80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the members) is perceived to accurately describe Islington United's current volunteer situation placing considered strain on the more active members of our congregation.
8. **Our Aging Facilities:** Our church is aging and in need of repairs. It is also in need of modernization as the demands of many in society call for more up-to-date facilities in their place of worship.
9. **Ineffective Communication with Our Local Community:** There is a general consensus that we have not been effective at "getting our story out" to the local community (i.e., mission field) and that Islington United Church is not as well-known as it could and should be.
10. **Parking:** While the re-design of our church property added many new parking spaces and helped to alleviate this problem, parking on Sunday mornings continues to be a problem and a limitation to attract new members and meet the needs of aging members of our congregation.
11. **Lack of Succession Planning:** As we evolve as a church over the course of the next 12 years there will undoubtedly be changes in the members of our Ministerial Team. A succession planning process, including provisions for overlapping periods of service for key ministers, is required to smoothly navigate us through these transition periods.
12. **Committee-Oriented vs. Action-Oriented:** There is a concern that Islington United Church's groups and governance processes consume considerable time and energy of both the Ministerial Team and other staff and lay volunteers with too many meetings and committee processes. It is felt that this may be discouraging volunteer participation and diluting the effectiveness of our programs. This may be especially the case with younger individuals and new members who resist long-term commitments to programs that require many meetings and "committee-work".

13. **Lack of Training and Mentoring:** Many of our leaders are placed in charge in groups and committees with little or no leadership training. Our youth are often asked to undertake projects without a mentor or leader to provide guidance.
14. **Lack of a Social Justice Focus:** While Islington has witnessed recent growth in the number and quality of its social justice programs, this remains an area that is perceived to be a weakness of our church.
15. **Lack of Environmental Consciousness:** Many believe that our planet is in peril with global warming posing a serious threat to our quality of life. There is concern that Islington United Church has not kept pace with the need to be environmentally conscious. It is felt that Islington United Church needs to meet or exceed community standards and set a "green" example for other institutions in our community.

3.3 Identifying Our Opportunities:

We live in a rapidly changing world that is altering our congregation, our local community and in the world as we know it. Some of these changes are being fuelled by technological advances, others by global migration patterns, while still others reflect subtle shifts in the spiritual consciousness of our community. The Project 20/20 Teams were sensitive to these changes and identified these as opportunities for the mission of our church over the next 12 years. Some of the opportunities foreseen for our church are as follows: (note: the items are presented in no particular order)

1. **Our Talented and Committed Ministerial Team:** We have talented, experienced and creative ministers who have expressed their willingness to help navigate us into the next period in our evolution. This team represents a significant opportunity for our church.
2. **Our Committed and Generous Congregation:** Islington United Church begins its journey into the next 12 years with a strong membership base who have consistently shared their gifts generously. This will allow us to confront the challenges and launch new initiatives from a position of strength.
3. **Our Willingness to Change:** The Congregational Survey indicates that there is a keen willingness to evolve and change in order to modify our church and its programs to meet the spiritual hunger of the next generation. While this belief is not universal and there are some who may resist change, it is clear that most within our congregation are ready to adapt and meld our worship services and practices to ensure that Islington United Church remains strong, vital and relevant.
4. **Advances in Technology:** Our community is progressively shifting over to new ways to communicate through the increasing presence of the Internet and derivatives such as Facebook. These advances represent new ways by which to communicate with congregational members and to reach out to our community, and in particular, to younger generations.
5. **The Emerging Spirit Campaign:** The United Church of Canada has launched an ambitious campaign to raise awareness of the United Church with the community, and in particular, Generation X. This project will operate synergistically as we

- seek to engage new members. This project also offers several communication tools which may be used in our communication initiatives.
6. **New Research Tools:** The United Church of Canada's Environics Analytics Congregational Research Project offers fresh and valuable insights into our local community to help us better understand their spiritual needs. The pilot project reveals that we live in a community that has comparatively high spiritual receptivity. This tool will provide a valuable resource as we reach out to our community.
 7. **Our Expanding Population:** The Toronto Urban Plan reveals that Etobicoke City Centre (i.e., our mission field) is experiencing rapid population growth and especially over the course of the next five years. In fact, Etobicoke City Centre is considered one of the city's boom areas with several new developments recently completed and soon to be completed in the Westwood Lands/Six Points area and the Islington Subway Lands. This will especially result in an increase the number of young families moving into our mission field as many of these building projects will offer townhouses and condominiums designed for young families. This increase in the population of our mission field will create new opportunities to bring our message of Christ's love to new residents in the community.
 8. **An Increased Need for a Spiritual Community Center:** The Toronto Urban Plan indicates that there will be no new schools built in our community despite an increase in the number of children within our mission field. The current plan calls for a program to bus children to more remote schools within Etobicoke. This means that many children will be geographically displaced from their classmates. There is an opportunity for Islington United to establish itself as a community center for our children and youth with an after-school drop-in center designed to address the needs of these children within a Christian context.
 9. **An Increased Need for Quality Christian Daycare:** There may also be an increased need for a Christian daycare center within our church to address the needs of pre-schoolers who settle within our community.
 10. **An Increased Need for Pastoral Care:** Our aging congregation, as well as the aging of the established neighbourhoods in our mission field, will translate into an increased need for pastoral care and social support over the course of the next 12 years. This need will be increasing at the same time when it is forecasted that our community support structures will come under increasing strain. There is an opportunity for Islington United to play an important role to help bridge this gap.
 11. **An Increased Need for Support for New Canadians:** Many of the people who have and will move into our community are from developing countries with dramatically different cultures. There will be a need to assist these new members of our society to integrate into the community in the years ahead.
 12. **An Increased Need for Social Justice Initiatives:** There are numerous issues that confront the rights of various groups within society where Islington United Church may play a role or facilitate the actions of other groups. These may include serving as an advocacy group for various powerless or disadvantaged groups (e.g., homeless) who live within our city.

3.4 Understanding the Threats

As with any spiritual organization, there are threats that may limit our ability to fully achieve our mission and vision on the next 12 years. It is important to be cognizant of these threats to ensure that we build a vision that is practical, actionable and strategic. The Project 20/20 Teams identified both internal and external threats that need to be taken into consideration during this transitional period and in the years ahead: (note: the items are presented in no particular order.)

Internal Threats

1. **Complacency:** A key threat to any organization is the belief that the status quo is acceptable and desirable. Clearly it is easy to fall into this mind set given our beautiful church, a strong Ministerial Team and an active, relatively large congregation. However, our aging congregation suggests that complacency will endanger the vitality and relevance of our church during the next 12 years.
2. **Fear of Change:** It is natural for individuals to fear the unknown, and especially when an organization that we love and cherish announces its intentions to change. It will be important to reassure members that the change will be gradual and that the needs of the congregation will continue to be cherished as we evolve over the course of the next 12 years.
3. **Lack of a Strategic Focus (Becoming Overwhelmed):** There are a myriad of needs within our congregation and community that call for our attention. It would be quite easy to over-extend ourselves and become overwhelmed. Placing unrealistic demands on our resources will have deleterious long-term consequences for our staff, volunteers and donor base. We must acknowledge that the needs that exist will always exceed our resources, and that we cannot realistically expect to be all things to all people. It will be crucial to maintain discipline and focus in our strategic initiatives to ensure that we achieve an optimal, sustainable and Christ-centered impact on our congregation, our local community and beyond.
4. **Scarcity Thinking:** Many United Churches, as well as other organizations, respond to declining membership by limiting their activities. Members begin to lose faith in what can be achieved. This often leads to further declines as the organization withdraws inward and its relevancy and mission are impeded.
5. **Short Term Thinking versus Long Term Visioning:** It would be easy for Islington United Church to focus on its immediate needs without consideration for its longer term mission. Both short term and long term needs must be considered in our deliberations and plans.

External Threats

6. **Changes in Attitudes towards Organized Religion:** The perceived role of organized religion on the world geo-political stage is often not well understood by the broader community. Many have come to view organized religion as intolerant, politically conservative or even a threat to world peace. We have not been effective at conveying our own story to the community to counter the blizzard of negative press organized religion has endured over the course of the last decade.

7. **Changes in Philosophical Beliefs Concerning Religion:** With the explosion of mass media and micro-media the members of our society are being inundated by a wide array of information about religious belief and its various practices across our planet. As a result, many within society are increasingly bewildered by the number of choices by which they may explore their spirituality. This fact, amplified by the increasing cosmopolitan mosaic of religious belief within our community, means that our Christian theology remains only one of many avenues available by which to embrace spirituality. In some sense, this is a positive development. However, at the same time, it has made individuals more sceptical concerning religions which purport to be the "one true path" to salvation and personal growth.
8. **Social Disengagement:** There is a considerable body of research that indicates that participation in social organizations of all types is on the decline. This research also indicates that individuals are spending less and less time with one another in direct social contact. This has led some to raise concern that it will become progressively more difficult to attract individuals to join in communal worship and in our faith community.
9. **Societal Time Pressures:** Research also indicates that there are increasing time demands being placed on individuals from the workplace, due to commuting time and the logistical demands of parenting children enrolled in several activities and programs. As time pressures increase, many are increasingly reluctant to commit to any activity which will require more of their time.
10. **The Competition for Volunteer and Donor Resources:** As Islington United Church's volunteer and donor bases are being challenged, the same is true for other organizations in our society. There is increasing competition between community and national organizations for volunteers and donations with many using innovative and aggressive approaches.
11. **Changes in the Economy:** Canada has enjoyed a large and prosperous economy over the last decade with solid economic growth, relatively low levels of unemployment, a rising stock market and a large Baby-Boomer population that is at the peak of their earning potential and relatively flush with pre-retirement savings. While not all have shared this prosperity, these have been comparatively ideal times from the perspective of organizations that must survive on donations. We cannot assume that these strong economic times will last indefinitely.
12. **Changing Legislation and Tax Laws towards Religious Organizations:** Much of the favourable legislation and tax advantages that have been granted to religious organizations were introduced in a different era many decades ago. As the demographic profile and attitudes of society change, the favourable treatment of religious organizations by all levels of government can not be taken for granted. It will be important that our voice is heard in the political arena as societal values shape tax and legislative decisions over the course of the next 12 years.

4.0 Project 20/20 Planning Team Vision Themes

The Project 20/20 Planning Team has studied and vigorously debated numerous paths for Islington United Church over the next 12 years. We have attempted to weigh what we believe Christ is calling us to be as a church in the year 2020 while remaining cognizant of what is practical given the finite limits of our time, talent and treasure. We have sought to balance the increasing and just need for pastoral care of our loyal and aging congregation with the compelling desire to extend ourselves through social justice initiatives and congregational development bringing Christ's message of love and joy to our surrounding community and beyond. At times, we must admit, we have been divided as to what is the best course for the near and long-term future of our church. However, after prayerful consideration we have converged on a common vision.

Thus, the Project 20/20 Planning Team submits the following vision themes for the evolution of our church. Based on our analysis and we submit that Islington United Church is being called by God to channel our resources into three main areas:

1. To develop a proactive, innovative ministry designed to explore, develop, implement and refine worship and spiritual growth opportunities that reach, engage and address the spiritual needs of new and younger generations.
2. To continue to build on the strengths of our existing heritages and address the pastoral and spiritual requirements of existing members, and especially those in need.
3. To enhance our involvement within our local mission field and the broader community through strategic and effective social justice initiatives.

To achieve the above directions and utilize our resources in the most effective manner, it is further recommended that Islington United Church embrace the following principles:

1. To marshal our financial resources in a manner that is responsible and sustainable with full awareness of our congregation's financial circumstances.
2. To streamline our governance to make better use of our limited time and to create an organization engineered to facilitate change.
3. To develop a church culture that embraces change with an open-mind, careful planning and a strategic focus. A critical aspect of this culture should include systematic and rigorous evaluation of our projects and programs that encourages excellence, evolution and growth.
4. To strategically modernize our church facility to ensure that it is designed to promote our mission in a manner that is responsible, environmentally-friendly and safe.
5. To strengthen our commitment to our spiritual practices and make these practices central to the life of Islington United Church and everything we do. This will involve increased dedication to:
 - a. Prayer and meditation;
 - b. Reading of the Bible and reflection on our biblical faith;
 - c. Care for others;
 - d. Christian action that makes a difference in the world;

- e. Sacrificial offering of our lives and resources;
- f. Hospitality.

The remainder of this report is intended to provide a more detailed review of each of these imperatives as well as our recommendations to translate these principles into an action plan for our church.

5.0 Congregational Development

The Project 20/20 Planning Teams recommends that Congregational Development be considered one of our key priorities. Without a concerted and sustained effort to attract new, younger members our ability to achieve other objectives (e.g., pastoral care, social justice issues) will be compromised and eventually impossible.

The need to build our congregation, especially among young singles, young couples and young families has been evident throughout our journey during the last six months. This need is clearly shared by our congregation. In the Congregational Survey individuals were asked to rate each of 21 items as either a "high priority", "moderately priority" or "low priority" for Islington United Church over the course of the next three to five years. The three areas most often rated as "high priority" include:

1. Attracting New Members (65%)
2. Developing Programs for Youth and Teens (61%)
3. Developing Programs for Young Adults (60%).

In addition, 49 percent considered it a high priority to "Develop Programs for Young Families" (6th highest priority), 48 percent felt we needed to develop programs for "Children" (7th highest priority) and 47 percent considered it imperative that we develop programs for "Families with Teens" (8th highest priority).

This need was also identified in many of the Project 20/20 Ministry Team reports, and most notably in the presentations by Congregational Development, Worship and Music and Pastoral Care. Notes from the God and Guinness focus group and the Seekers Youth Group also echoed the need for change to address the spiritual needs of younger generations.

The development of a concerted, proactive and sustained ministry to establish a relationship with persons born after 1963, (*Generation X*: born 1963 to 1981 and currently 24 to 46 years old; and the *Echo Boomers*: born after 1982) will have broad implications for every aspect of our church. We recognize that this is the responsibility of all members of our church. We also acknowledge that this realignment may create tensions in the congregation between current practices that satisfy the needs of our existing members and new practices we add to offer sustenance aligned to the spiritual hunger of younger generations.

As such, we will approach this journey with the following principles in mind:

1. We understand that to welcome anyone new into our community of faith will necessitate change. We will approach this change with courage and grace.
2. We will continue to value the current forms and practices in order to meet the needs of current members as long as they continues to represent the collective needs of our congregation. We envision a thoughtful and measured approach to this transition. This will entail an initial expansion of worship service options and programs with a gradual shift towards new forms of worship and programs over the course of the next 12 years.
3. We will build on our current strengths to ensure the same exceptional quality of programs and worship in new forms that we have enjoyed and valued in the past.
4. It is understood that this transition will entail "meeting with" people in new generations rather than a "converting" new generations to our ways. It will be a mutually enhancing and mutually transformative connection as, together, we explore and rejoice in the diversity and abundance of God.

With these principles in mind, we recommend the following immediate actions:

5.1 Congregational Development: Coordinating Team

1. We recommend establishing a fulltime minister with the primary focus on Congregational Development. It should be noted the Project 20/20 Planning Team draws a clear distinction between Congregational Development (i.e., developing methods to reach and engage new members) and Social Justice Initiatives. We strongly recommend that Social Justice Initiatives not be considered the primary focus of the Congregational Development Minister's mandate.
2. The responsibility of Congregational Development can not reside in a single minister or individual. We therefore recommend establishing a Congregational Development Coordinating Team led or co-led by the fulltime Congregational Development Minister and/or a lay leader and consisting of the respective chairs of the three Congregational Development sub-groups.
3. The Congregational Development Coordinating Team would be an umbrella committee with the following subcommittees: the Communications Team, the Website Working Group and a new committee, yet to be named, which will be referred to as the "Welcoming Team". Each of these will play an important role in our initiatives to reach out to young singles, young couples and young families.

5.2 Communications Group

We recommend that the Communication Group be mandated to explore the following new initiatives as part of this program:

1. Develop an introductory pamphlet or DVD about Islington that could explain the church's history, ministerial team and programs. This may also be made available as a Podcast.

2. Conduct a detailed analysis of the Environics Analytics Congregational Research Pilot to develop a communication strategy and media plan that more effectively reaches our mission field with specific reference to younger generations.
3. Conduct a detailed review of the Emerging Spirit Project communication materials to determine how this material can be employed in the Islington United Church's communication program.
4. Explore the costs and feasibility of installing a new sign at the front of the church with an electronic scrolling message facing northwest with upcoming events and opportunities presented to traffic waiting on Burnhamthorpe Road and Crescent.
5. Explore and implement methods to promote and drive traffic to our web site.
6. Explore the implications of slightly changing our mission statement from: *"To be an open, friendly and caring church where people of all ages are invited to discover, explore and develop their spirituality in Christ's name"* to *"To be an open, friendly and caring church where all people are invited to explore their spirituality in Christ's name"* to reflect our new mission orientation.
7. Explore and implement methods to make better use of free public affairs journalism with articles and photos submitted to local papers (i.e. Guardian).
8. Develop a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) communication strategy to be promoted on our website, bulletins, Link Newsletter, community flyers and introductory material.

5.3 Website Working Group

We recommend that the Website Working Group be mandated to explore and implement the following new initiatives:

1. Conduct a feasibility study to determine how our website can be upgraded to better address the needs of the existing congregation and those looking for a new church home.
2. Explore and implement methods by which the website can be used to provide recent and past services or sermons as Podcasts.
3. Explore and implement methods by which the IUC website may be used to promote upcoming spiritual exploration and worship opportunities as well as our pastoral care and social justice initiatives.

5.4 The Welcoming Team

We recommend establishing a new group under the umbrella of the Congregational Development Team mandated to develop methods to reach out to prospective new members and existing members. We suggest that this new group be referred to as "The Welcoming Team".

One possible source for volunteers for this new group would be current and former Church Elders. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that our current policy of attempting to visit all church member and adherent households be reviewed in order to determine if this volunteer resource can be more effectively deployed in our congregational development initiatives. This will require determining which households would like to continue to receive a visit from an Elder and which households would

prefer to be communicated with through other means (e.g., emailing LINK) in order to focus our resources more appropriately.

Volunteers for this new and exciting group would receive special training concerning welcoming and attending to the needs of new members, visitors and others who we come in contact with through baptism, weddings and other services.

We recommend that this new group begin by exploring the following new initiatives:

1. First, lay leaders who are called to this mission would be responsible for developing a training program for the members of this team (there is considerable material available from the Emerging Spirit program as well as other churches).
2. Once a training process has been developed, the leaders would canvas members of the church, and especially Elders, to become part of this new committee.
3. Once the committee is established we recommend that it begin by exploring and implementing methods by which to greet first time or new visitors to the church. This could include setting up a kiosk or desk at the front of the church to answer questions and distribute literature about our church.
4. The team would also follow-up with families and individuals who attend our church for baptisms, weddings and other purposes.
5. The team would also be asked to develop a program, in conjunction with Pastoral Care, to follow up with persons who stop attending Sunday morning service.

As this Welcoming Team develops, we envision an expansion of their mandate. Some of the longer terms objectives of this group would include the following:

1. Work closely with various worship groups to explore new methods by which to make visitors feel welcome at our services.
2. Explore the possibility of appointing a mentor for each new member, like faith partners for confirmands.
3. Explore the possibility of developing valet parking for new members and elderly members coupled with an appeal for able body members to park off-site.
4. Explore other methods to make it easier for visitors to attend our Sunday morning services with recognition of the traffic congestion that currently inhibits visitors.
5. Work with the Minister to Youth to develop teen events such as dances or other social activities.
6. Explore methods to develop special activities and events for young families and their children (e.g., Faith Family Fridays).
7. Explore the possibility of establishing church sporting teams and leagues (e.g., basketball, bowling).
8. Explore opportunities by which to facilitate the development of friendships within Islington (e.g., after school programs; block parties).
9. Host social gatherings or other events for those in the Marriage Preparation course and other courses offered by Islington United Church to the broader community.

6.0 Worship and Music Programs

The need to evolve and address the needs of younger generations will entail changes to our worship services. This aspect of our transition is anticipated to be the most controversial and difficult to implement. In fact, the need for change has not always been apparent in our examination of our current situation. For example, the Congregational Survey revealed broad satisfaction with our current worship services:

- 97% considered our special services (e.g., Christmas) excellent or very good;
- 90% considered our Sunday morning sermons excellent or very good;
- 87% considered our Sunday morning music to be excellent or very good.

Moreover, only 23 percent identified changes to the Sunday service to be a "high priority", ranking this need 18th of the 20 items assessed and well back of more pressing matters.

However, it was noted that the majority of respondents to the Congregational Survey were longer term members with 74 percent over the age of 45. These strong endorsements of our current worship service are not always shared by our youth. For example, when the members of the Seekers Youth Group were asked "What turns you off about Islington United?" several commented that "the services were too long and boring", "the choice of music is too traditional", "prayers lack spontaneity", "there are not enough spiritual or intellectual questions" and "we cannot always connect with the sermons."

Participants in the God and Guinness discussion group also expressed reservations concerning the current worship service noting that "it was hoped that more uplifting and modern songs might be played on Sunday mornings alongside other more known hymns". There was hope that the service could have a more spontaneous feel, the scripture could be retold instead of read and prayers could be offered in the moment.

The Congregational Survey also reveals similar trends. For example, while 72 percent of those 25 or older rated the Sunday morning sermons as "excellent", only 14 percent of those 24 and under considered the sermons to be "excellent". Similarly, 65 percent of those 25 and older felt the Sunday morning music was "excellent" while only 48 percent of those 24 and under shared this impression. When asked how the Sunday morning service could be enhanced, the most common reply among those 44 and younger was to introduce more upbeat and contemporary music into the service. These findings are consistent with those observed in the United Church's research on the spiritual needs of "Generation X" which were conducted as part of the Emerging Spirit program.

While many of the worship services and programs of our church are perceived as valuable, and in many instances, exceptional, there is a growing awareness that the current forms of ministry do not always relate broadly to the spiritual needs of younger generations. With this in mind, we recommend establishing a new group, known as the *Emerging Spirit Project* to explore and develop new approaches for complementary

worship opportunities. This group would work in close conjunction with the Worship Committee and Congregational Development Coordinating Team.

6.1 The Emerging Spirit Project

The primary mandate of the Emerging Spirit Project would be to develop new worship opportunities for younger generations. It is hoped that this team will have members from a broad demographic range including members from younger generations. We recommend that this group be mandated to explore the following new initiatives:

1. Conduct an analysis to determine why "The Gathering" did not work.
2. Contact other churches to ask what has worked with younger generations.
3. Search the Internet for information on what other churches are trying.
4. Develop recommendations for new worship experiences and in particular complementary worship services. These services should be designed with a clear understanding of the target audience. They may be interactive, dynamic and engaging and draw upon the arts (e.g., drama) and interactive activities (role playing, breakout groups) as appropriate. They may include special speakers and dialogues with the minister. Consideration should also be given to holding these services in a non-traditional format (e.g., coffee house) with contemporary music.
5. Explore methods by which to enhance the current Sunday morning worship services and make recommendations to the Worship Committee as appropriate.

6.2 Worship Committee

The Worship Committee is an important group within our church. Its role is central to the health and vitality of our Sunday morning service which is the only point of contact we have with many of our members and adherents. It is also the service most visitors to our church will first experience. It will therefore be imperative that this committee be strong and well supported by talented and creative lay members.

Currently all five members of the Ministry Team are aligned with the Worship Committee. We recommend a realignment of this organization such that the Congregational Development Minister works with the Congregational Development Coordinating Team, the Minister to Youth works with the Emerging Spirit Project, the Sunday School Coordinator works with the Faith Formation Team (currently known as the Christian Development Committee) and the Senior Minister and Minister of Music works with the Worship Committee. The Minister of Pastoral Care would continue to work with the Pastoral Care Coordinating Committee.

We recommend that the Worship Committee be mandated to explore the following new initiatives:

1. Explore methods by which to expand the Sunday morning music program. This may include purchasing new hymn books (e.g., More Voices).
2. Explore methods to make use of multimedia technologies and other technologies to enhance the Sunday morning worship experience.

3. Explore methods by which to create more chances for members to share their faith experiences by speaking on Sundays.
4. Explore methods by which to place stronger emphasis on social justice issues, including environmental issues, during Sunday services.
5. Explore methods to increase participation by youth in the Sunday morning services (e.g., youth speakers).

6.3 Faith Formation Team (i.e., Christian Development Committee)

One of the more disturbing findings during our journey was that our Sunday School is currently struggling to provide quality Christian education due to an inadequate number of qualified Sunday school teachers. While there are many reasons why this is the case, this problem is considered one of the most pressing challenges confronting our church at this time. It is recognized that having a quality Sunday School will be imperative in provide a sound Christian foundation for our children and pass our faith on to the next generation. Moreover, research from the Emerging Spirit program has indicated that the quality of a Sunday School program is one of the main criterion used by young families to determine whether or not to become involved with a new church. It is therefore recommended that this team be mandated to immediately begin an investigation to determine and understand how this problem can be resolved.

In addition to this pressing and most urgent need, the Planning Team also advances the following recommendations:

1. That the name of this group be changed from the "Christian Development Committee" to the "Faith Formation Team" to better reflect its mandate of fostering spirituality within our congregation and mission field.
2. Explore the possibility of developing an informal discussion group between services that would allow individuals to discuss the sermon and gospel topics in greater detail. This discussion group could be held after each Sunday morning service and moderated by a lay leader or minister. In time, there may also be a special discussion group developed specifically for youth and young adults or for new members to our church.
3. Investigate ways to engage and support families in the application of Sunday School learning to everyday life. This may take the form of suggested dinner table reflections/games or discussion topics related to the church service theme.

7.0 Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is a critical aspect of Islington United Church's mission. It is also acknowledged to one of the church's current strengths. Most of the committees in this area are well organized, well trained and forward thinking in their endeavours. The Pastoral Care Ministry Team concluded that all current programs are worthwhile and should be continued, but evaluated on an ongoing basis. While the Planning Team concurs with this assessment, we recommend that a review of the current Elders program is needed to determine whether it is currently making best use of the time and talents of our volunteers. This assessment should review the possibility of using our Elders more strategically, and particularly for congregational development activities.

As with all programs in our church, the Pastoral Care Ministry Team acknowledged that pastoral care groups are challenged by an aging congregation, possible volunteer burnout and our ever changing community. It was also reported in our interviews with the Ministerial Team that there was an increasing demand on the ministers for pastoral care as the congregation ages and become more comfortable with the ministers.

Currently, all members of the ministerial team are expected to provide pastoral care in addition to their area of specialization. It is noted that the staff model, which specifies areas of concentration for members of the Ministerial Team, has been effective, but often difficult to implement because of the demands placed on members of the Ministerial Team for pastoral care. It has also been noted that the requirements of pastoral care were not always well defined. This has made it difficult to set objectives in this area and to assess performance.

The following recommendations were advanced by the Planning Team and the Pastoral Care Ministry Team with respect to the delivery of pastoral care:

1. Review methods by which the laity may play a larger role in providing pastoral care to ensure that the Ministerial Team is not overwhelmed with requests and unable to address other needs within the church. This change will also be required with the establishment of a fulltime Congregational Development Minister (note: 50 percent of the time of the current Minister of Congregational Development time is allocated to pastoral care).
2. To explore the possibility of developing new support groups for persons in transition, including, but not limited to, persons going through divorce, depression, grief and illness.
3. Review the Pastoral Care initiatives to determine how they may be adapted to meet the needs of younger generations and especially those new to our faith.
4. Determine whether there is a need for new Pastoral Care initiatives to address the unique pastoral care needs of younger generations.
5. Develop a "Shepherding Program" where trained Pastoral Care laity would wear an identifiable symbol (e.g., white ribbon) at service and special events that would signify that this person could be approached about pastoral care matters.
6. Hold Healing Prayer services after every service in a quiet location.
7. Ensure that at least one minister is available at the end of hospitality each Sunday.
8. Enhance our communication of pastoral care work within the church through several methods (e.g., LINK Newsletter, Deed of the Week, our website).
9. Set up a bulletin board for people to post requests for special assistance and remembrances.
10. Create a Minister's Box for requests for pastoral care.
11. Establish a "Youth to Seniors" program to foster intergenerational dialogue.
12. Develop methods by which to evaluate pastoral care initiatives.

8.0 Social Justice Initiatives

Islington United Church is blessed with a number of social justice programs including the following:

1. Mission and Service (M&S)
2. Refugee Support Ministry
3. English Conversation
4. Benevolent Fund
5. Emergency Food Pantry
6. Christmas Project
7. Mabelle Food Program
8. Homework Club
9. Breakfast Club
10. Mabelle Community Coalition
11. Out of the Cold
12. GO Project
13. UCW Projects

In the Congregational Survey, two-thirds considered our mission work in the local community to be excellent or very good while the majority (54%) considered our contribution to missions abroad excellent or very good. However, it is recognized that there is a need for more social justice initiatives within our community and that this should be an important focus for our church.

It is acknowledged that social justice initiatives are a clear mandate of the Gospel of Christ. Such initiatives will raise Islington United Church's profile within the community resulting in new members. It is also acknowledged that social justice initiatives are particularly important to younger individuals who seek to translate their spiritual beliefs into action within the local community.

Nevertheless, the Planning Team perceives these latter outcomes as collateral benefits of social justice initiatives and not their main purpose. As such, we recommend that a clear distinction be made between Congregational Development and Social Justice Initiatives.

Based on input from the Mission and Outreach Ministry Team and the Congregational Development Ministry Team, the Project 20/20 recommends that consideration be given to establishing a Social Justice Coordinating Group to coordinate Islington United Church's social justice initiatives. The Social Justice Coordinating Group would have the following mandate:

1. Establish a method by which to evaluate possible social justice initiatives including setting specific criteria for success.
2. Review current social justice initiatives for their effectiveness and alignment with our current mission and values.

3. Determine whether there are similar social justice initiatives offered by other United Churches in our area that would allow us to work synergistically and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
4. Review new social justice initiatives to be considered within the church.
5. Facilitate the planning and development of new programs.
6. Assist with the implementation of these programs.
7. Assess program effectiveness and make recommendations as to whether these programs should be continued.
8. Communicate with the congregation through worship services and other means about these programs.
9. Promote appropriate social justice issues in our worship services by inviting speakers to address our congregation in worship and at other gatherings.

The Planning Team also recommends that one of the primary areas of focus for the Social Justice Coordinating Team should be to identify ways in which Islington United can make its facilities, people and programs environmentally-conscious incorporating this as one of our values and setting an example for our community.

9.0 Facilities

Islington United Church is blessed with a signature building and a wealth of facilities. At the same time it is acknowledged that some of our infrastructure is aging and out of date. There have been thorough space utilization studies (e.g., Making Room, 2002) and study groups (e.g., Dream Team) which have made a large number of sound recommendations concerning enhancements to our space. The primary obstacle preventing the implementation of these recommendations has been the lack of available funding. Moreover, it is acknowledged that significant expenditures to enhance our building are unlikely to be available in the near future. Nevertheless, as a growing church it will be necessary to budget and fundraise to ensure that our space supports our strategic mission.

With these limitations in mind, the Planning Team advances the following recommendations with respect to the modernization and maintenance of our facilities:

1. The issue of safety occurred several times in various Ministry Team reports. Safety needs to be one of our key priorities. There may be a need to develop a "Safety Team" to work in cooperation with the Facilities Committee to ensure that safety matters are dealt with as soon as possible when they are identified.
2. There is an urgent need to ensure that our Nursery and Toddler Room are up to date. Young families will be significantly influenced in their opinion of our church based on the quality of our facilities in our Nursery and Toddler rooms. Ideally, the Nursery should be located as close as possible to the Sanctuary.
3. There is a need for a "crying room" to allow a place for parents/caregivers with upset children to retreat while still being able to see and hear the service. It is recommended that this be achieved by placing a television monitor in a specific quiet room and broadcasting the service into this room.
4. The Sanctuary needs to be air conditioned within the next three years to provide a comfortable environment for summer worship services.

5. The sound system needs to be inspected to determine how it can be modernized in the most cost effective manner to consistently provide excellent sound quality.
6. There is a need to review the current internal signage in our building to help visitors and new members to find their way around our facilities. This would be part of a larger initiative to make our church more visitor-friendly.
7. There is a need to explore how new technologies (e.g., large screens) can be incorporated into our worship service to provide a state-of-the-art worship experience.
8. Consideration should be given to removing the pews from the central section of the Sanctuary to add flexibility and novelty to our worship services.
9. It is imperative to make our church as accessible as possible to those who are handicapped or movement impaired.
10. Consideration should be given to developing a coffee house or drop-in center for youth and young adults.
11. There is a need for Islington United Church to adopt an environmentally-friendly approach to the evolution of the church's facilities and be a "green leader" within our community.

In the future, the Planning Team envisions larger scale initiatives to transform the use and design of our space including the development of a Christian day care center possibly in partnership with an outside agency and the construction of an atrium to provide a special area for meetings and gatherings.

It is envisioned that various teams within the church (e.g., Welcoming Team, The Emerging Spirit Project, Pastoral Care Coordinating Team, Vision Facilitators) will work closely with the Facilities Committee to suggest ways in which our church facilities can be enhanced to support our strategic initiatives.

10.0 Financial Prudence and Stewardship

Islington United is indeed blessed by an abundance of resources and its members have given generously to support Islington United's mission and vision over the years. It is acknowledged that there is a need to be realistic concerning the extent to which we can expect the congregation to continue to increase their contributions.

The Planning Team devoted considerable time to review the current financial circumstances of Islington United Church. We have learned that the total number of identifiable donor households has declined from 745 (in 1992) to 585 (2007), that this decline was especially evident from 1999 to 2003 and that the number of donors has stabilized since this time. We have also learned that the average amount given by each donor household has increased from \$600 in 1995 to approximately \$1,300 in 2005. Overall, 47.1 percent of contributions are received from 7.1 percent of households; 16.3 percent from the next 5.5 percent of households and 21.4 percent from the next 12.9 percent of donor households. This means that 84.8 percent of the contributions are received from 34.0 percent of households in our congregation. It was also learned that 39.9 percent of the households current contribute nothing or make an anonymous offering through loose collections. The Planning Team also acknowledges that the economy had

been strong in the last ten years, but is currently showing signs of softening over the course of the next year or so. Any downturn in the economy could impact the ability of the congregation to maintain or increase givings.

The Planning Team acknowledges that Islington United has traditionally operated with a balanced budget or a nearly balanced budget through the last ten years. We also note that there has been a significant increase in our operating expenses during the past two years due to expansion of the Ministerial Team, church office staff and our program activities. This deficit represents an estimated 6.5 percent of the total operating budget.

In the congregational survey, 38 percent of the respondents identified repaying the church deficit as a high priority (which was only the 14th highest priority of the 20 assessed, but nevertheless important to many in the congregation). However, when asked to identify concerns they had about Islington United Church, 17 percent spontaneously mentioned "deficit financing", more than any other matter. Deficit financing is especially a concern for older members of our congregation. Thus, 31 percent of those 65 and older stated that they were concerned about our current budget deficit. By contrast, only 10 percent of those 45 to 64, 7 percent of those 25 to 44 and 0 percent of those 24 and younger expressed this concern.

The Planning Team acknowledges that attracting new members to Islington United will not initially resolve our financial imbalance as new members traditionally contribute modestly until they are more firmly engaged in the church. As a result, if we are to realize our aspirations as a church we will need to rely on the generosity of our current congregation, fundraising initiatives and our Legacy of Faith planned giving program.

The Project 20/20 Planning Team struggled with these facts and considered three options including a conservative (zero-based budget) approach, an expansionary budget approach and a project-based budget. Care was exercised to avoid fear-based, scarcity thinking with cognizance of potential donor and congregational aging trends.

The following represent our recommendations concerning the management of our financial resources:

1. That Islington United make a long-term commitment to balanced budgeting and strive to achieve this objective by 2009. It is imperative that Islington United Church responds to the concerns of many current members regarding the recent budget deficit.
2. That Islington United Church will need to expand over the course of the next 12 years as we realign to our new missions and objectives, but that at least one year is required to allow church revenues to align with current expenses and to absorb salaries currently covered by the trust fund administered by the Board of Trustees. It is our recommendation that future expansion be based on increases in the commitments of the congregation and not deficit financing.
3. That there be a one year freeze on program spending.

4. That there be a one year freeze on new hires (excluding necessary staff replacements which would be considered on a case-by-case basis).
5. That salaries be held for one year, other than inflationary adjustments and other previously committed increases.
6. That consideration be given to developing a multi-year fund raising program similar to Polaris for the fall of 2008 designed to cover the expenses of new initiatives.
7. That our efforts in the area of planned giving and congregational endowments in the form of our Legacy of Faith planned giving program be continued and where possible, expanded.
8. That Islington United explore possible corporate partnerships for selected future social justice initiatives.

In addition to these measures, the Planning Team recommends that the following initiatives be undertaken with respect to the budgeting process by the Loaves & Fishes Committee:

1. That the budget development process be reviewed for its efficiency and effectiveness.
2. That Islington United develops a multi-year budget for the period 2008 to 2012 in order to finance capital expenditures.
3. That a formal policy concerning honorariums and program cost subsidies be developed and implemented.
4. That the budget separate capital expenses from operating expenses.
5. That Islington United strives to establish a contingency fund during years where budget surpluses are possible.

11.0 Governance

The myriad accomplishments of our lay leaders have been remarkable during the past decade. It is important to celebrate the incredible role they have played to help ensure the vitality of our church.

However, the research of the Project 20/20 Planning Team, as well as the Ministry Teams, indicates a concern about the ability of lay leaders and active members to sustain their current level of involvement. Team members frequently referred to "volunteer burnout" and the increased inability to recruit people for leadership and other roles.

It is noted that many committees are not well-staffed and that several committee chairs remain vacant. In particular, it is difficult to get the committee chairs to attend and participate on Church Council. Moreover, coordinating the efforts and initiatives of the many committees that shape Islington United Church's evolution has become increasingly challenging and labour intensive.

Islington United Church will need to streamline and adjust its methods of governance and nurture and train its current and future leaders to ensure meaningful ministry in the year 2020. Further, as the church evolves and expands, it will be increasingly important to

develop a structure which facilitates coordinated evolution while ensuring the most efficient use of its leaders' time and talents. Therefore, with recognition that all changes will need to be consistent with the constitution of our church and approved by presbytery, the Planning Team advances the following recommendations:

11.1 Church Council

The Planning Team recommends that the current Church Council be replaced by a new, more streamlined governing body consisting of following:

1. The new Church Council would include nine executive members: the Chair of Council, the Senior Minister, the Assistant Chair, the Treasurer, a representative from Ministry and Personnel and four senior committee chairs who would serve on council for a one year period on a rotational basis. The quorum for the new Church Council would be six members.
2. The new Church Council would also be attended by a team of 3 to 5 Vision Facilitators (i.e., internal consultants or coaches) who would work throughout the church on a one-on-one basis with the Ministerial Team, Coordinating Team chairs and group leaders to assist with the coordinated implementation of our mission and vision. Vision Facilitators would be non-voting members of Church Council.
3. Other representatives from the Ministerial Team would be welcome to participate in all Church Council meetings as non-voting visitors, but they would not be required to attend all meetings.

11.2 Vision Facilitators

The Vision Facilitators would represent a new and vital addition to the Church Council. It is envisioned that this would be a group of between three to five individuals who would receive special training concerning program management and leadership which would then be passed on to the leaders of various committees and ad hoc groups. The mandate of the Vision Facilitators would be as follows:

1. To meet on a regular basis (independently of the Church Council) to coordinate and review their activities and receive special continual training in a model similar to that used by our Stephen Ministers.
2. To work on a one-on-one basis with Coordinating Team Chairs, Committee Chairs and other ad hoc leaders to assist with the development of new programs and initiatives that are aligned with the mission and vision of the church.
3. To guide group leaders regarding best practices concerning program planning, development and implementation and identify the need for leadership training.
4. To guide group leaders regarding program evaluation.
5. To identify and assist group leaders with problem resolution.
6. To help groups become aware of resources available within the church that they may draw upon when pursuing their initiatives.
7. To identify duplication of effort and redundancies within the church.
8. To help eliminate "silos" within the church through cross-communications among groups and the cross-fertilization of ideas among groups.

9. To report back to the Church Council and the Ministerial Team concerning progress of various initiatives and potential problems or concerns.

The Vision Facilitators would be especially important for new projects or initiatives by those who are not familiar with the church and its operations. They would be spiritually grounded persons, very familiar with the life of Islington United Church and who have a deep understanding of the vision and calling of our church. They would therefore be invaluable in helping to empower small group ministries within our church.

The Vision Facilitators would also be individuals within the church who thoroughly understand the mission and vision of the church. They should also be capable leaders and listeners and willing to take special leadership training and project planning courses to prepare them for this position.

One of the special functions of the Vision Facilitators would be in the area of project and program evaluation. The Vision Facilitators would receive special training in the area of best practices concerning program evaluation. They would work with various group leaders in our church to assist them with the evaluation of their respective programs and to help them determine how these programs can be improved to make them more effective and efficient. It must be stressed that the Vision Facilitators would not be program auditors, but rather facilitators of this evaluation process.

11.3 Ministerial Team

The Planning Team also reviewed the structure and operations of the Ministerial Team. The Ministers and Ministry and Personnel (M&P) reported that the current team is working well and effective at supporting one another during period of high work demand or special family needs.

However, concern was expressed that there is increasing pressure being placed on ministers for pastoral care and this need was making it difficult for ministers to attend to other matters. The Planning Team reviewed various models for ministry teams presented in the *"The Inviting Church"* (Oswald and Leas, 1987). The book presented four different models for ministry based on the size of the church: *The Family Church* (average attendance at service 50 or less); *The Pastoral Church* (average attendance at service between 50 and 150); *The Program Church* (average attendance at service between 150 and 350) and the *Corporate (or Cathedral) Church* (average attendance at service more than 350).

The Planning Team concluded that our Ministerial Team was currently operating like a *Pastoral Church*, where all members of the congregation expect and receive pastoral care from all ministers, including the Senior Minister. With a church of our size, this is likely to be ineffective since our ministers will inevitably become overwhelmed by the demands for pastoral care.

Based on our current size, the Planning Team recommends that Islington United Church's Ministerial Team explore ways to adopt a "Cathedral Church" organizational

structure. With this model, the congregation's pastoral care needs would be primarily met by trained lay leaders and the minister or ministers specifically designed to provide pastoral care. Other ministers, and in particular, the Senior Minister, would normally only provide liturgical forms of pastoral care.

The Cathedral Church model advocates a distinctive role for the Senior Minister as the team leader responsible for the coordination of staff efforts and the empowerment of specific staff members to ensure the realization of our overall church vision. The Senior Minister, within this model, is also expected to play an important role as a spokesperson for the church in the broader community to ensure that Islington United plays an active role in community initiatives. To undertake these new responsibilities it will be necessary for the Senior Ministry to play a reduced role in the day-to-day delivery of pastoral care to congregational members.

It is understood that a change of this nature may be resisted by many within our church, and in particular, by those who have come to expect that ministers will be there when needed for pastoral assistance. It is also understood that it may be difficult for existing ministers to set new boundaries with respect to the delivery of pastoral care. Therefore, this process will need to be carefully reviewed with M&P, the new Church Council and all members of the Ministerial Team to determine how best to approach this culture change within our church. It is recommended that a Ministerial Team study group be developed during the course of the next six months to explore these issues in greater depth and to present their recommendation to the Church Council in 2008.

Over the course of the 12 twelve years there will undoubtedly be changes in our Minister Team. At this time there is no clear succession plan that has been developed or put in place to facilitate these inevitable transition periods. There are also no contingencies in place by which to fund staff transition. Therefore, the Planning Team recommends that M&P, in cooperation with the Ministerial Team, be asked to develop a Ministerial Succession Plan over the course of 2008 and that this plan be presented to the Church Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that any additional costs resulting from this Ministerial Succession Plan be included in Islington United Church's multi-year budgeting process.

The Planning Team acknowledges that the exploring the implications of the Cathedral Church Model and developing a Ministerial Succession Plan will require considerable time and effort. Therefore, it is recommended that consideration be given to expanding the M&P committee during the implementation of these recommendations. Moreover, there may be the need for special training of key members of M&P to facilitate this process.

11.4 Church Staff Team

Our Church Staff is also a critical part of the team that has contributed so much towards the spiritual life of our church. Our Church Staff, supplemented by a handful of dedicated volunteers, is currently working at full capacity and often puts in long hours

to help keep our church running smoothly throughout the year. Often this involves an exceptional amount of unpaid overtime which clearly exceeds reasonable expectations.

The Project 20/20 Planning Team recommends that a review of the current work of the office staff be conducted by designate of the Church Council to determine how others in the congregation may be enlisted to assist with this work. It is also recommended that an Office Staff Succession Plan be developed, similar to that developed for the Ministerial Team to provide a process to facilitate changes in staff and volunteer members.

12.0 Action Plan

Our short term action plan is intended to be revenue and volunteer-neutral (i.e., not requiring additional funds or volunteer time). We propose establishing three new groups within the church (i.e., The Welcoming Team; The Emerging Spirit Project; Vision Facilitators) by recruiting from our existing volunteer base, most notably, our Elders. We propose streamlining Church Council and restructuring the Ministerial Team to allow time to be redirected towards our new proposed mission.

There is no question that there is much work ahead and our blueprint will require refinement and increased definition. It is our hope is that this vision will help guide Islington United Church's realignment of its resources to create momentum, evolution and growth as we seek to continue Christ's mission in the years to come. All our hopes reside in you, Christ, Our Lord...we seek affirmation...listen...and abide.

Most respectfully,
Project 20/20 Planning Team

Joan Hunter (Co-Lead)
Carole Bennett (Co-Lead)
Rev. Rob Dagleish (United Church of Canada)
Ian McPherson (Preliminary-Lead)
Jacqueline Carter
Ron Jewell
David Lang
Fred Leslie
Andrew Pollock
Elsa van Vliet

Appendix One: Membership of Project 20/20 Task Force

Project 20/20 Oversight Team

Rev. Mark Aitchison (Senior Minister)
John Leavitt (Chair of Church Council)
Carole Bennett (Stewardship & Church Administrator)
Debbie Stephens (Chair of Loaves & Fishes Committee)

Project 20/20 Planning Team

Joan Hunter (Co-Lead)	Carole Bennett (Co-Lead)
Rev. Rob Dalglish (United Church of Canada)	Ian McPherson (Preliminary-Lead)
Jacqueline Carter	Ron Jewell
David Lang	Fred Leslie
Andrew Pollock	Elsa van Vliet

Project 20/20 Worship and Music Ministry Team

Candice Lemieux (Lead)	Dr. John Derksen
Jack Grady	Rev. Dr. Mike Wood Daly
Rev. Mark Aitchison	Pat Wood
Murray Wood	Judy Burrell
David Townsend	

Project 20/20 Pastoral Care Ministry Team

Ted Wilson (Co-Lead)	Dorothea Vickers (Co-Lead)
Isla Grady	Bev Walton
Rev. Linda Wheler	Maureen Wilson

Project 20/20 Faith Formation Ministry Team

Leslie Arsenault (Staff-Lead)	Peter Cop (Lay-Lead)
Sandra Cop (Lay-Lead)	Dr. John Derksen (Staff-lead)
Ron Jewell	Anna Mosley
Michael Shewburg (Staff-Lead)	

Project 20/20 Mission and Outreach Ministry Team

Val Greenfield (Lead)	Jackie Blackwell
Kim Blackwell	Rev. Cathy Dilts
Wanda Gambrell	Donna Leslie
Peter Lindsay	Michael Shewburg
Julie Smith	

Project 20/20 Congregational Development Ministry Team

Brad Weaver (Lead)	Rev. Cathy Dilts
Roy Hood	Linda Wheler
Sue Peter	

Congregational Survey Final Results



Project 20/20

Planning Islington United Church's Future



Background

- Congregational members were asked to complete a detailed survey (Sept 16 to Oct 31, 2007):
 - What did they value most about their experience at Islington United Church
 - What were their impressions of the worship service
 - What were their opinions concerning summer worship
 - What were their opinions of our programs and facilities
 - What they liked best about Islington United
 - What concerns they had about the Islington United
 - What should be our future priorities
 - What changes would make them more engaged

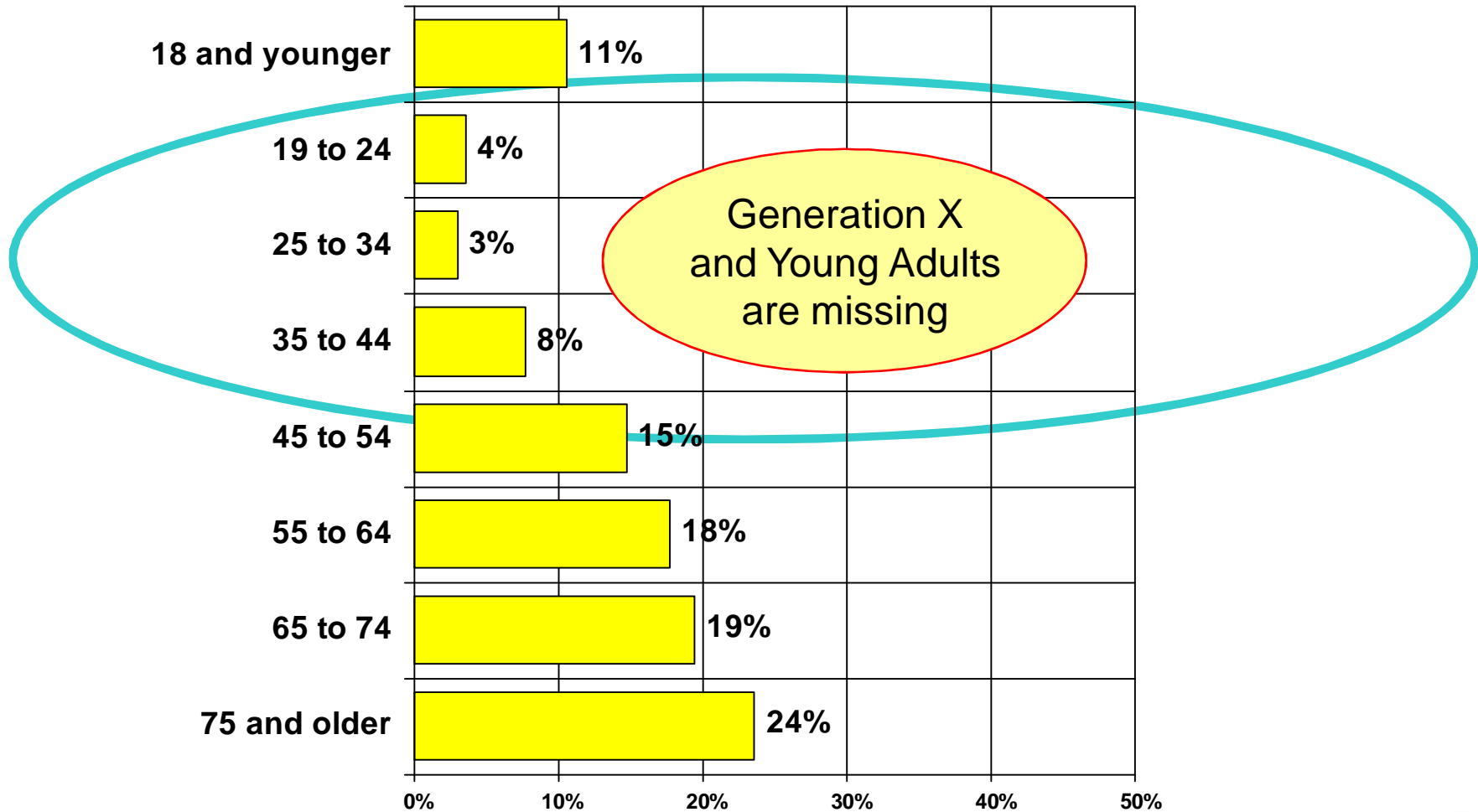


Who completed the Survey?

- 178 questionnaires were returned
 - 68% were female
 - 86% current members
 - 19 years average length of membership
(13% less than two years; 37% less than 10 years)
 - 82% attend most or all Sunday services
 - 52% serve on a Sunday morning team
 - 61% participate in a church committee
 - 29% live alone; 36% live with their spouse/partner

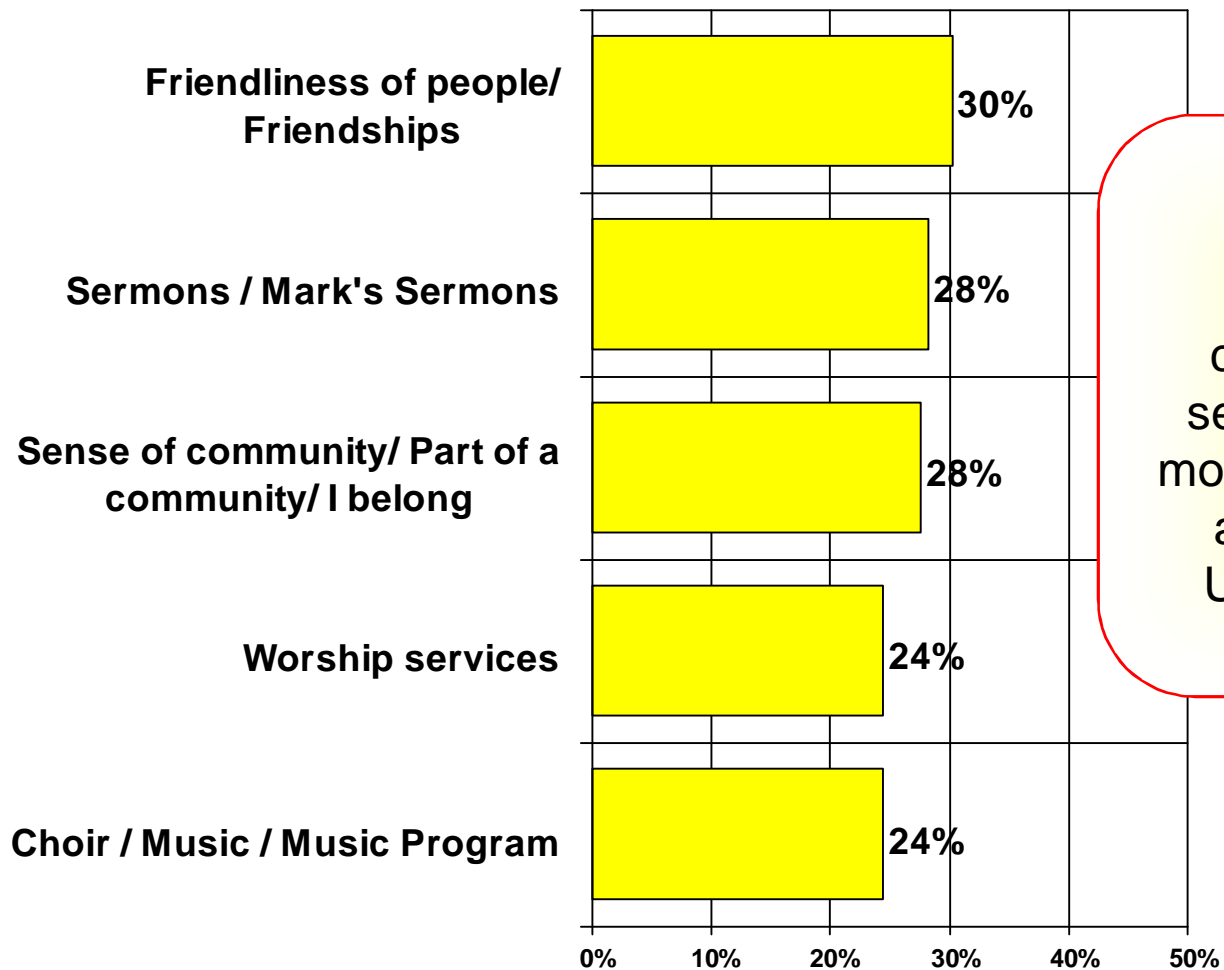
Only 12% are families (with children under 18)

Who completed the Survey? Age



What do you value most about your experience at Islington United?

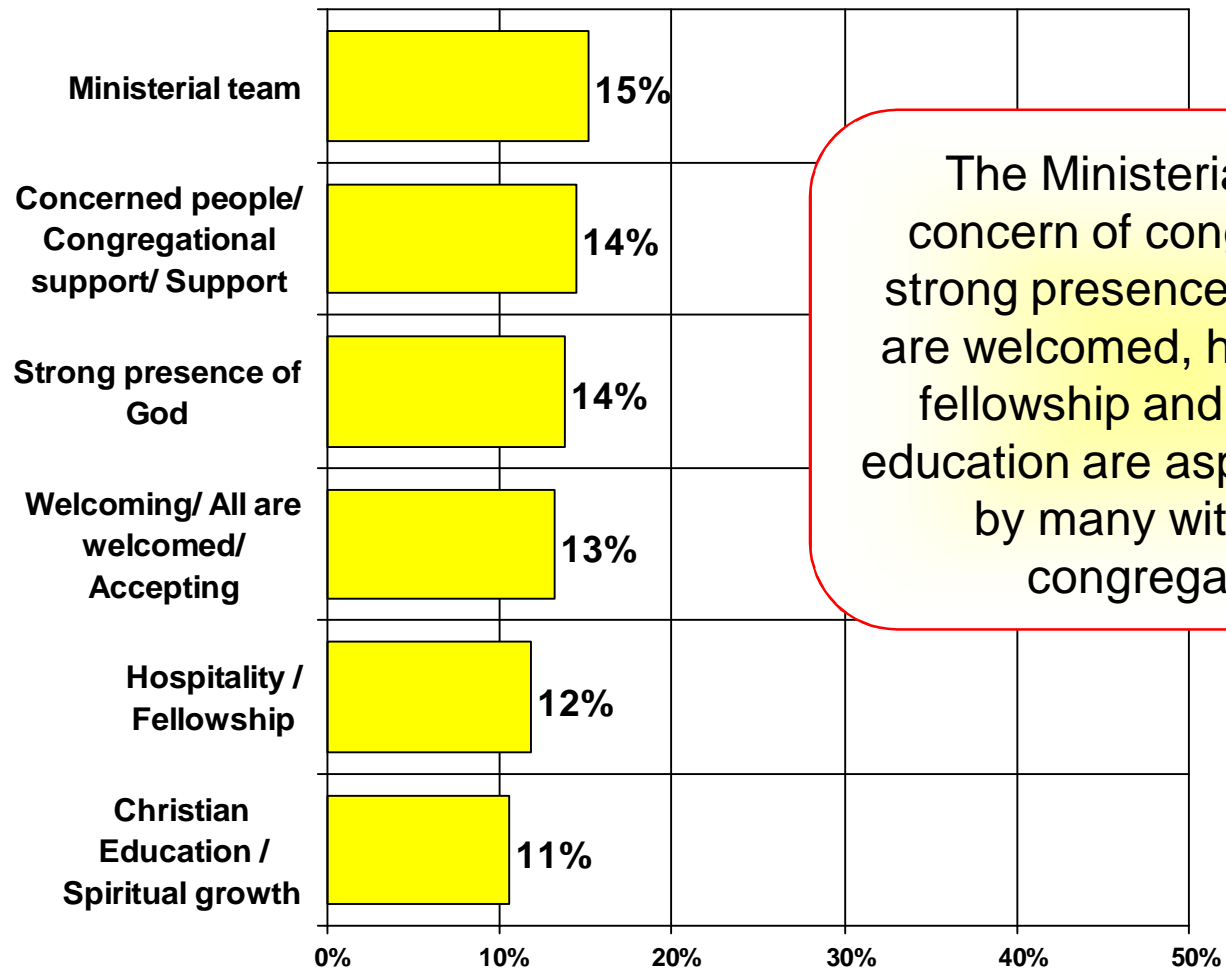
Most Frequently Mentioned



Friendliness of the congregation, the sermons, sense of community, worship service and music are most often mentioned as aspects of Islington United that are most valued.

What do you value most about your experience at Islington United?

Other Common Mentions

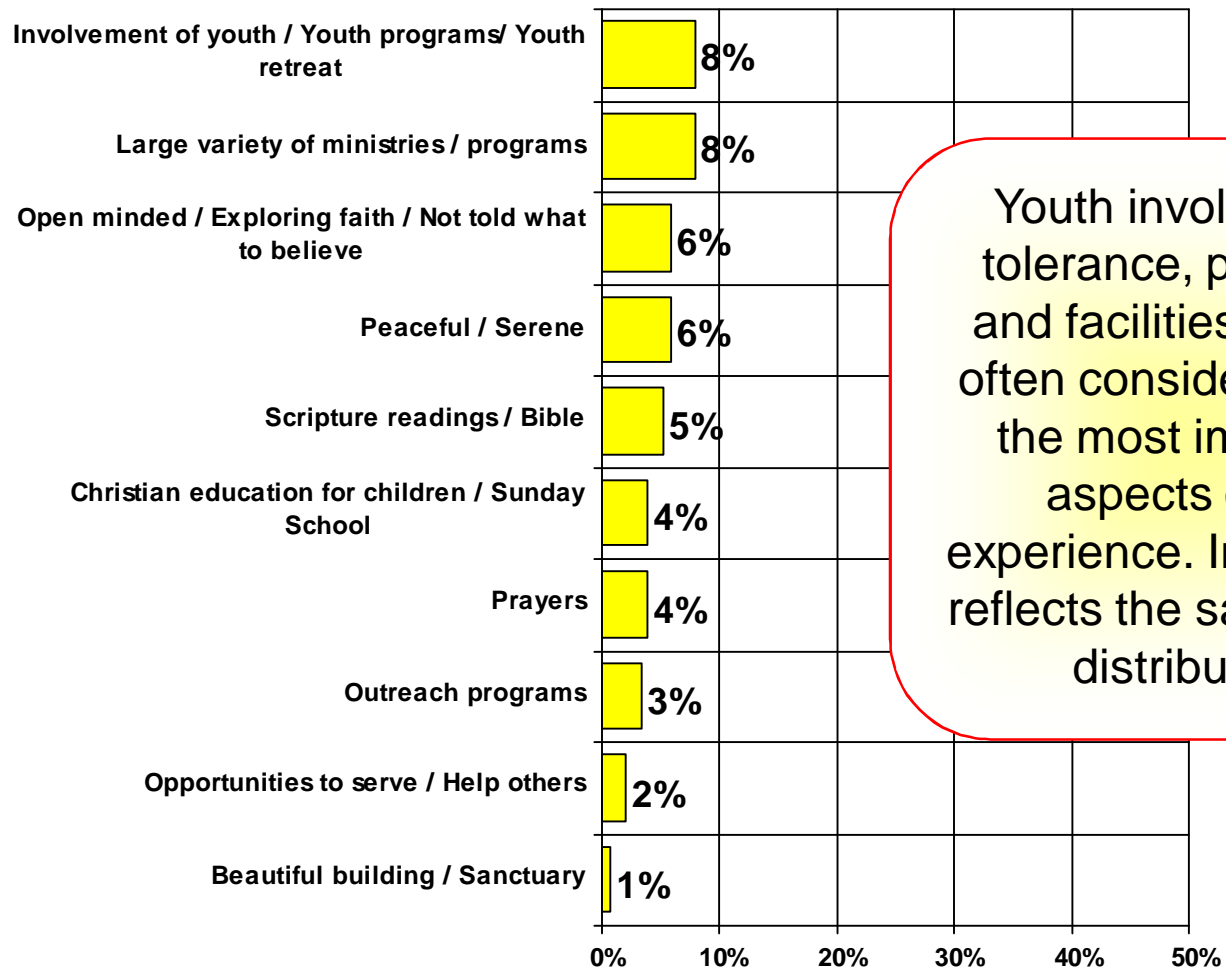


The Ministerial Team, concern of congregation, strong presence of God, all are welcomed, hospitality & fellowship and Christian education are aspects valued by many within the congregation.



What do you value most about your experience at Islington United?

Less Frequent Mentions

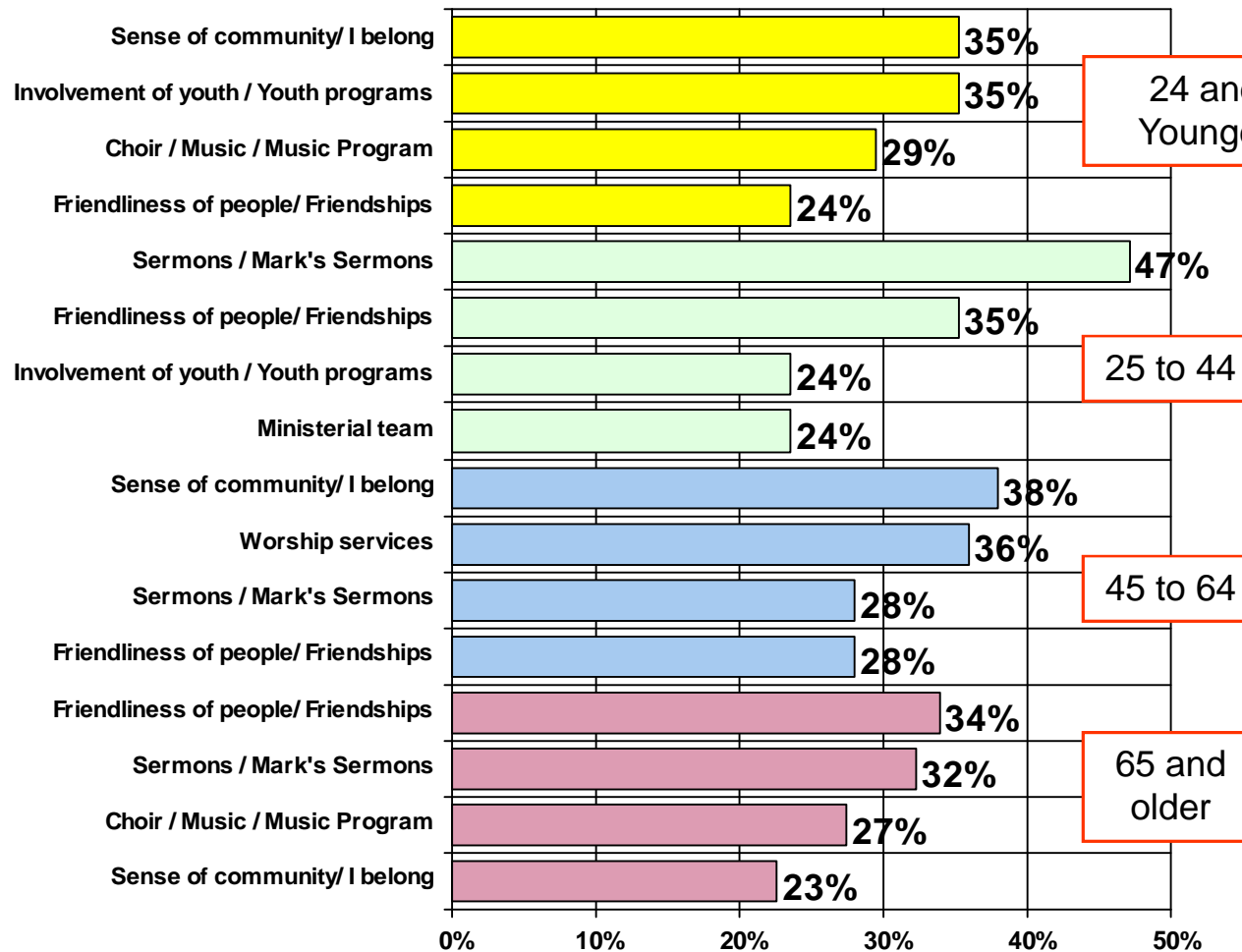


Youth involvement, tolerance, programs and facilities are less often considered to be the most important aspects of the experience. In part, this reflects the sample age distribution.



What do you value most about your experience at Islington United?

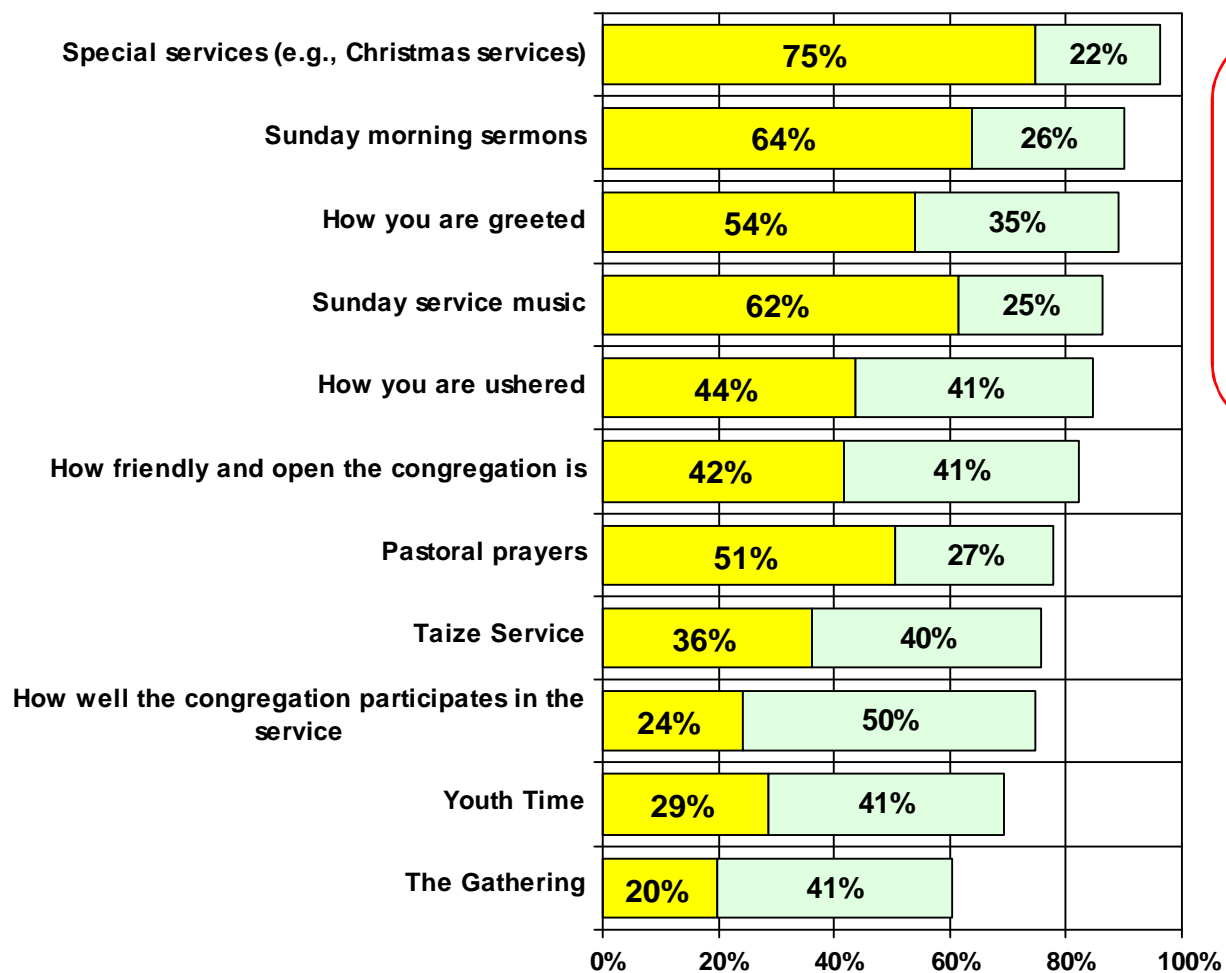
Most Frequently Mentioned By Age



While the friendliness of the congregation and a sense of community is important to all age groups, those 44 and younger were more likely to value the youth programs while Sunday morning sermons were more important to those 25 and older.

Evaluation of Worship Services at Islington United

Percent Excellent or Very Good

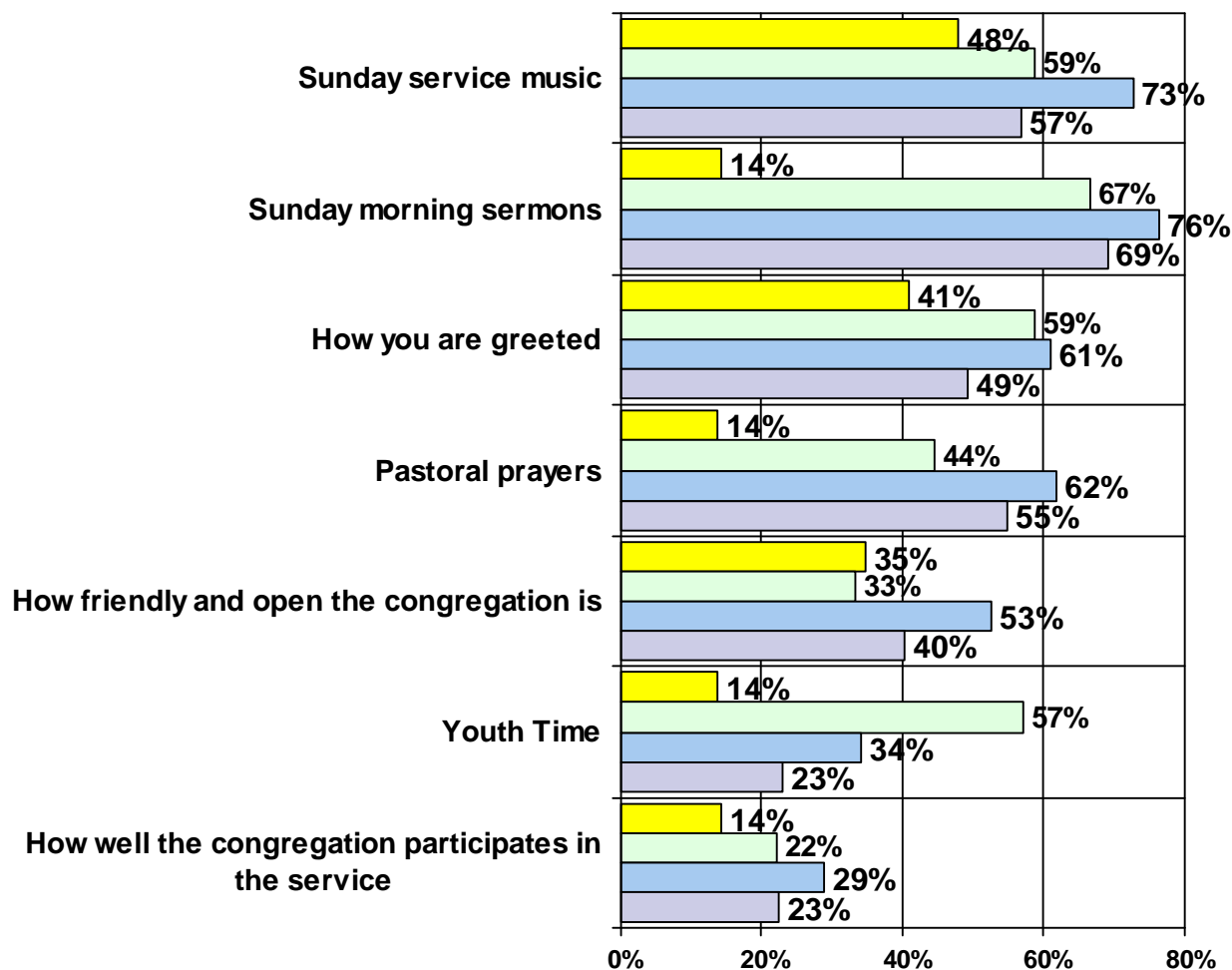


Special services, the sermons, music and how we are greeted are the aspects of worship most perceived as excellent or very good

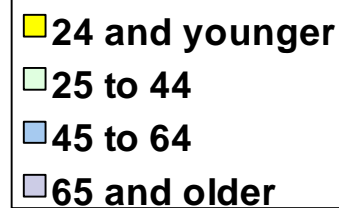
■ **Excellent**
■ **Very Good**

Evaluation of Worship Services at Islington United

Areas Considered “Excellent” By Age

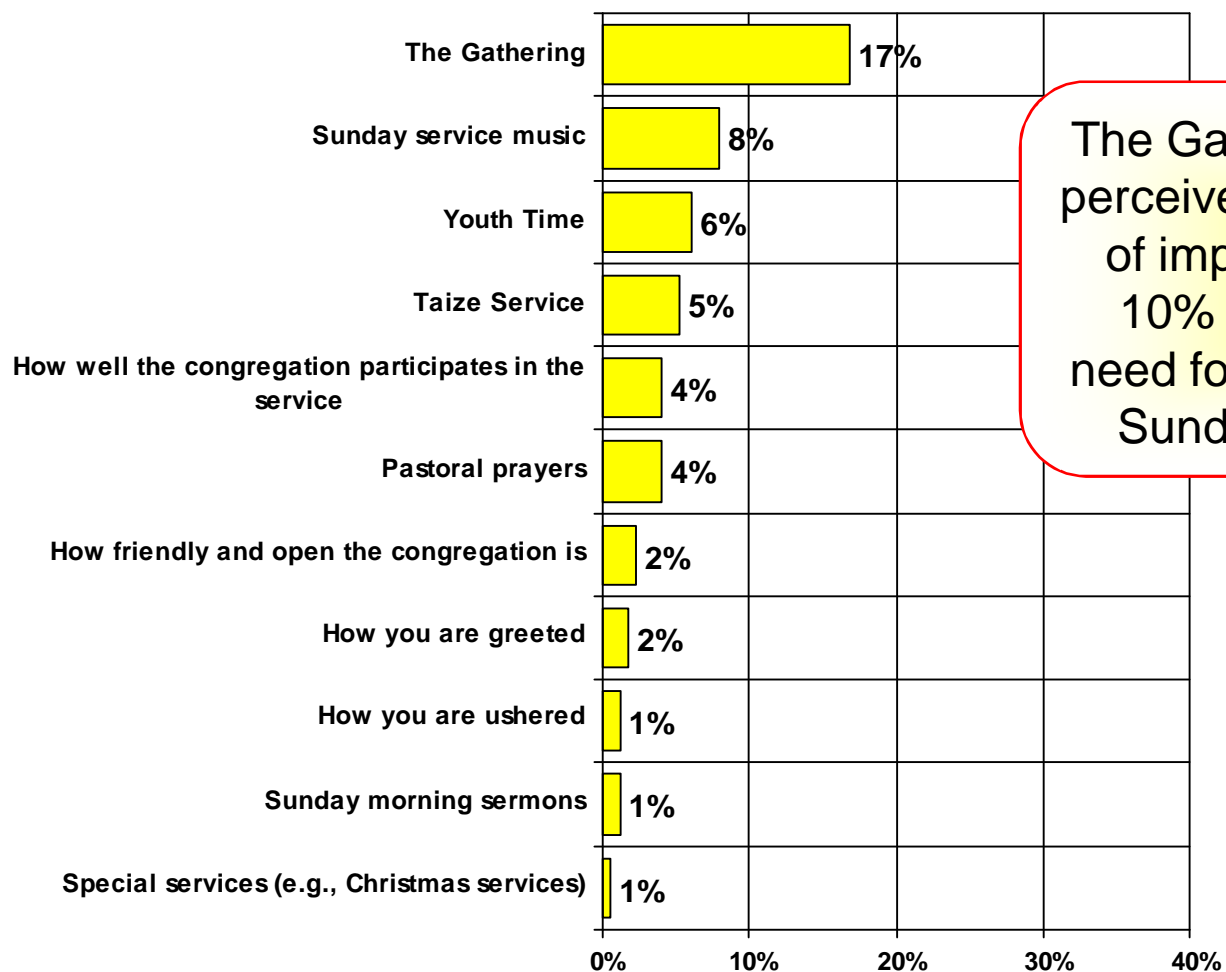


Those 24 and younger were less likely to consider the Sunday worship service to be excellent and especially the sermons, pastoral prayers and youth time. Those 25 to 44 were most likely to consider Youth Time to be excellent. Overall, those 45 to 64 appeared most satisfied with the current Sunday morning worship service.



Evaluation of Worship Services at Islington United

Percent Considering Area “Needs Improvement”

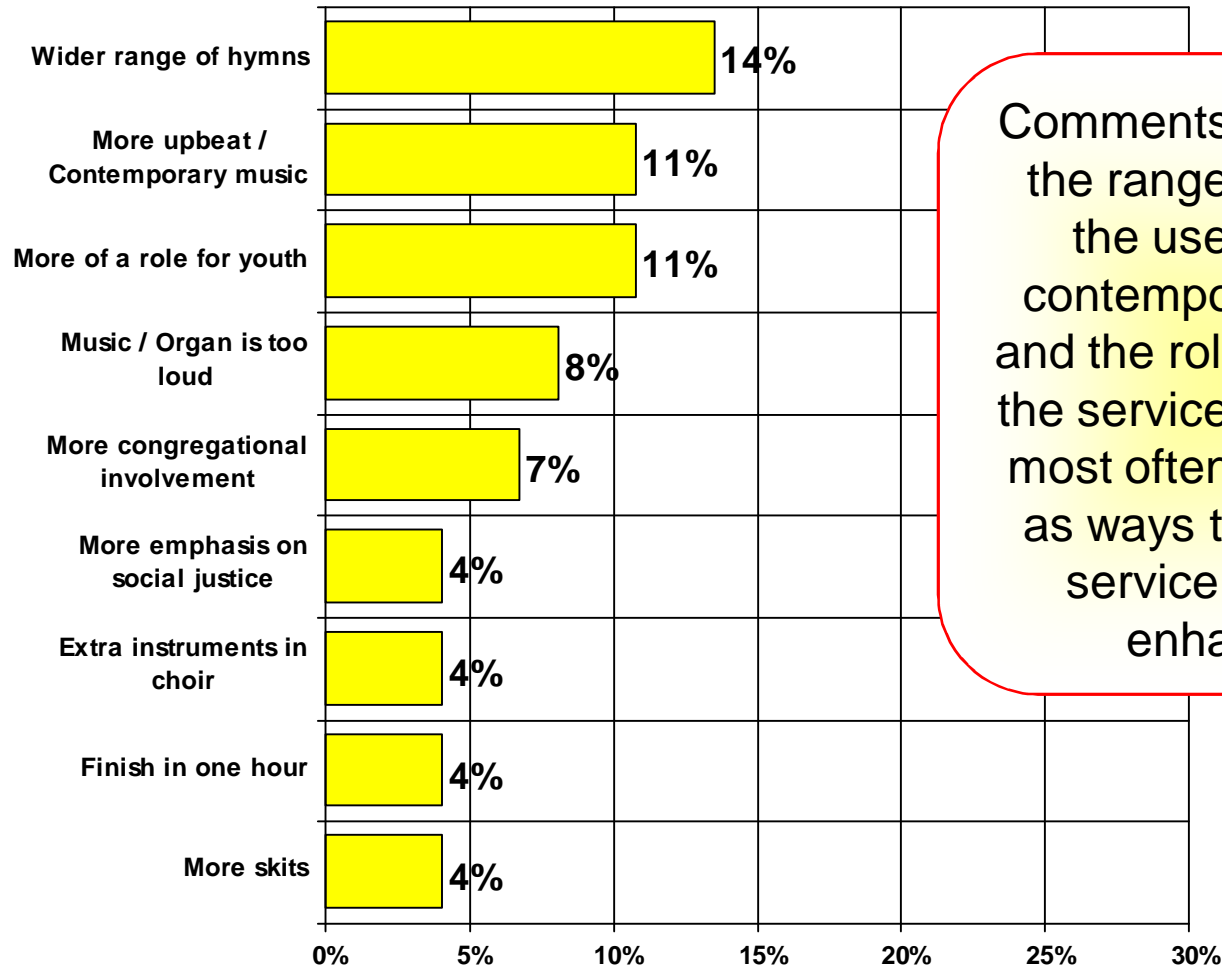


The Gathering was the area perceived to be most in need of improvements. Almost 10% feel there is also a need for improvement in the Sunday morning music.



How Worship Service Could Be Enhanced

Based on 74 Responses

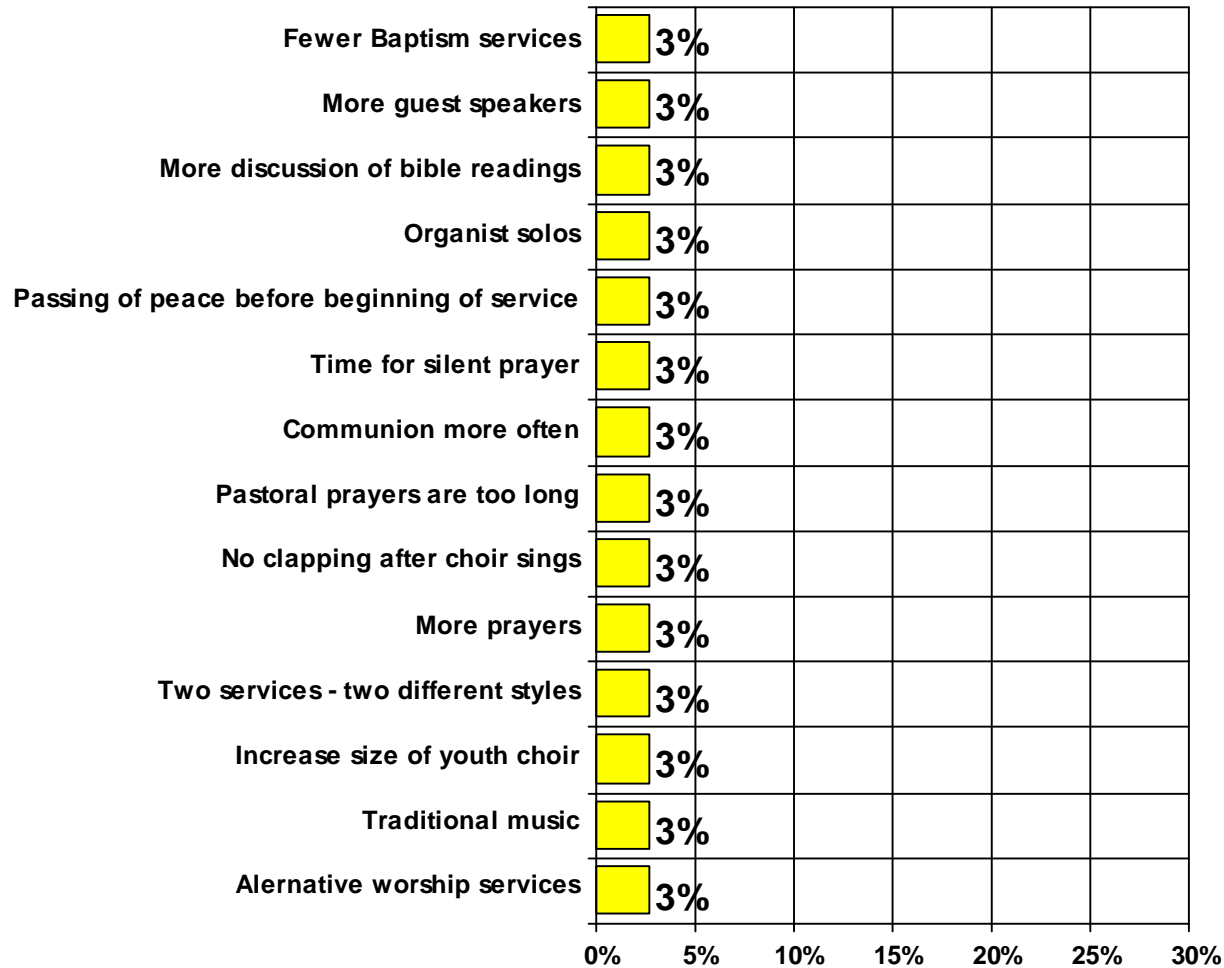


Comments concerning the range of hymns, the use of more contemporary music and the role of youth in the service were areas most often mentioned as ways the worship service could be enhanced.

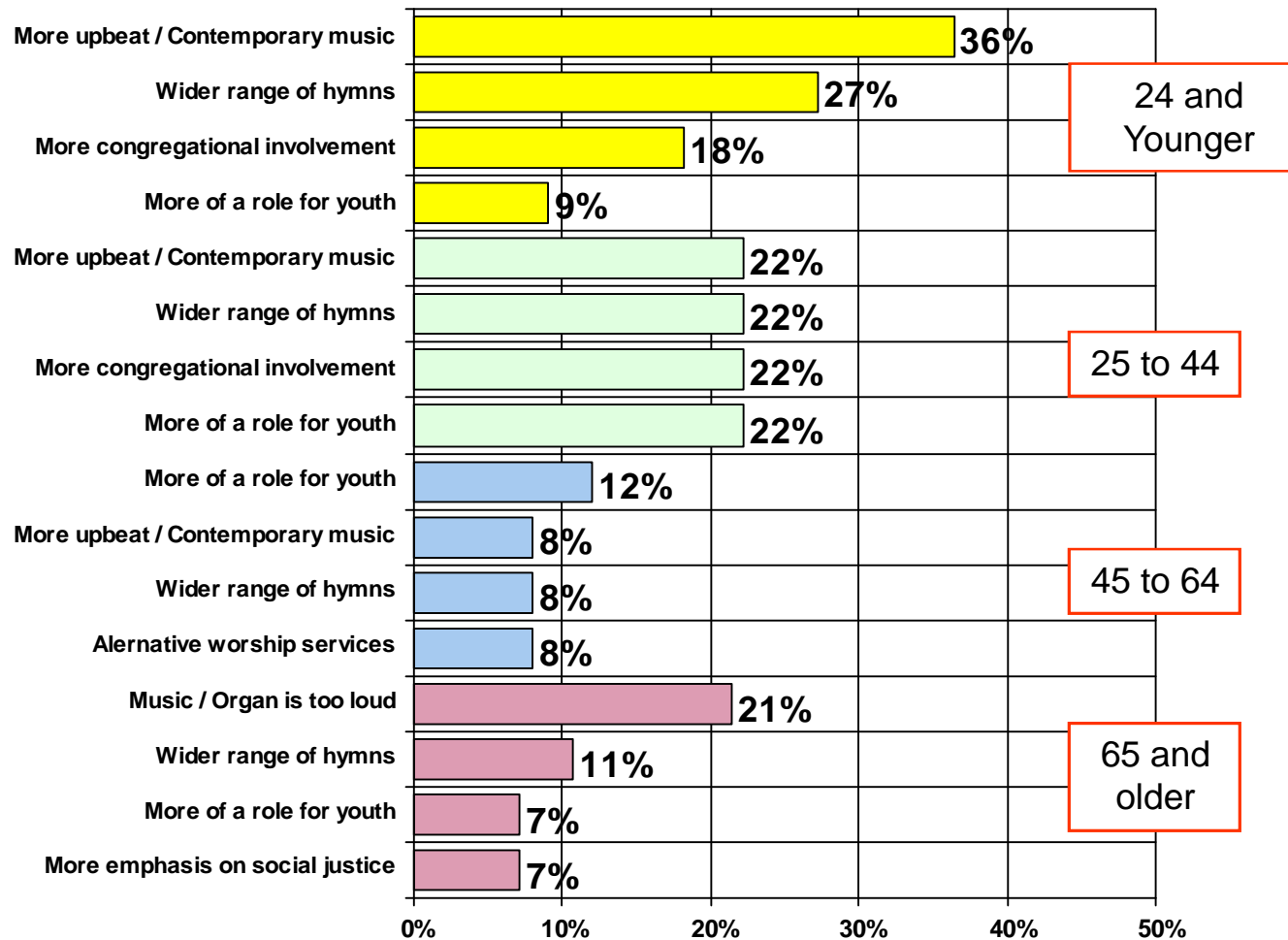


How Worship Service Could Be Enhanced

Additional Mentions (Based on 74 Responses)



How Worship Service Could Be Enhanced By Age of Respondent



All age groups felt that youth should be given a greater roll in the service.

However, the additional of upbeat/contemporary music was more important to those 44 and younger while those 65 and older felt the organ was sometimes too loud.

Summer Worship Service

■ How many services should we have?

- One service: 90%
- Two services: 10%

■ What time should this service be held?

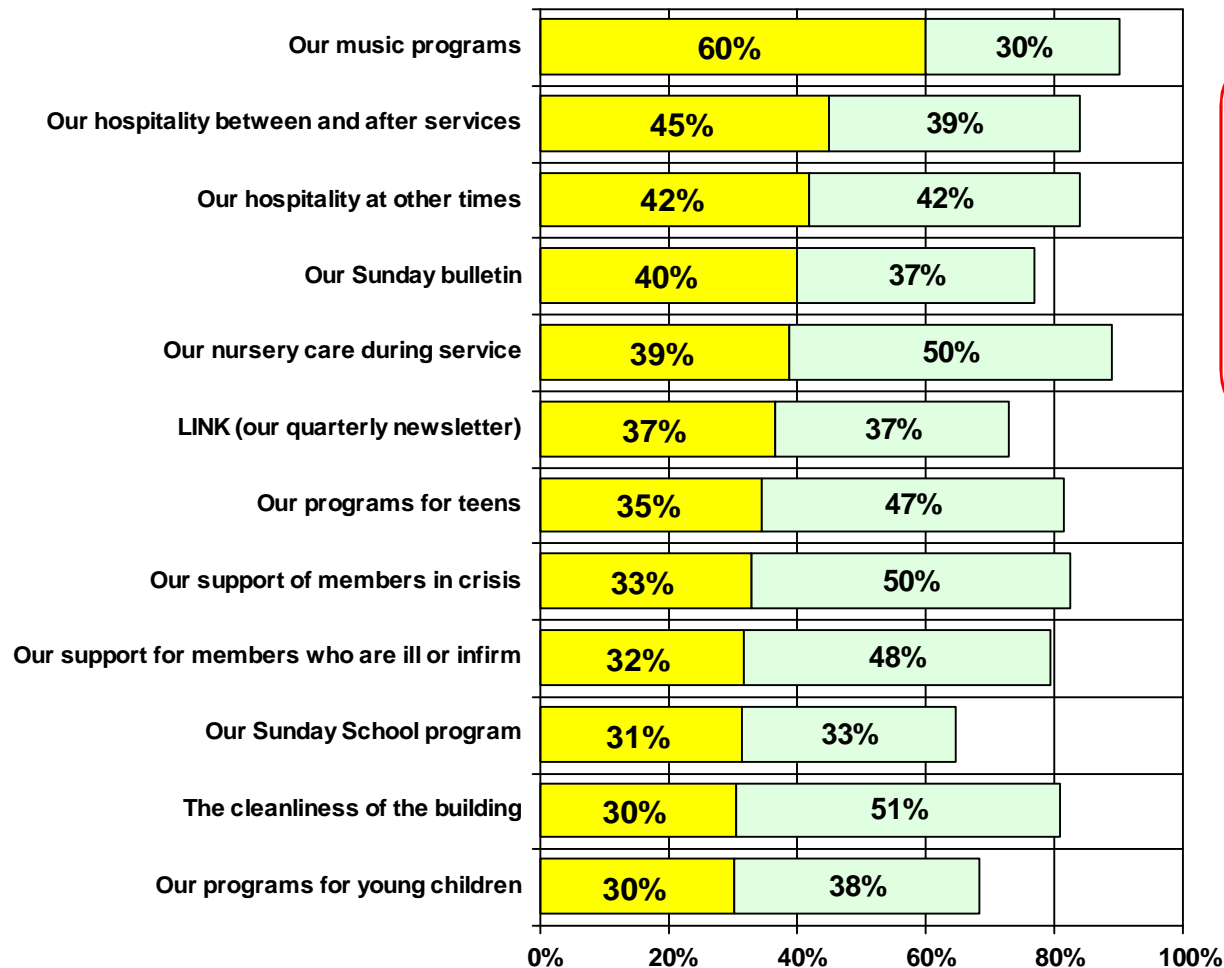
- 9:00 a.m. 12%
- 10:00 a.m. 70%
- 10:30 a.m. 18%

■ Where should we have the service?

- In the sanctuary: 27%
- In Stewart East Hall: 9%
- In Stewart East Hall: 64% (when it is hot)

Programs and Facilities

Areas Most Often Rated as Excellent or Very Good

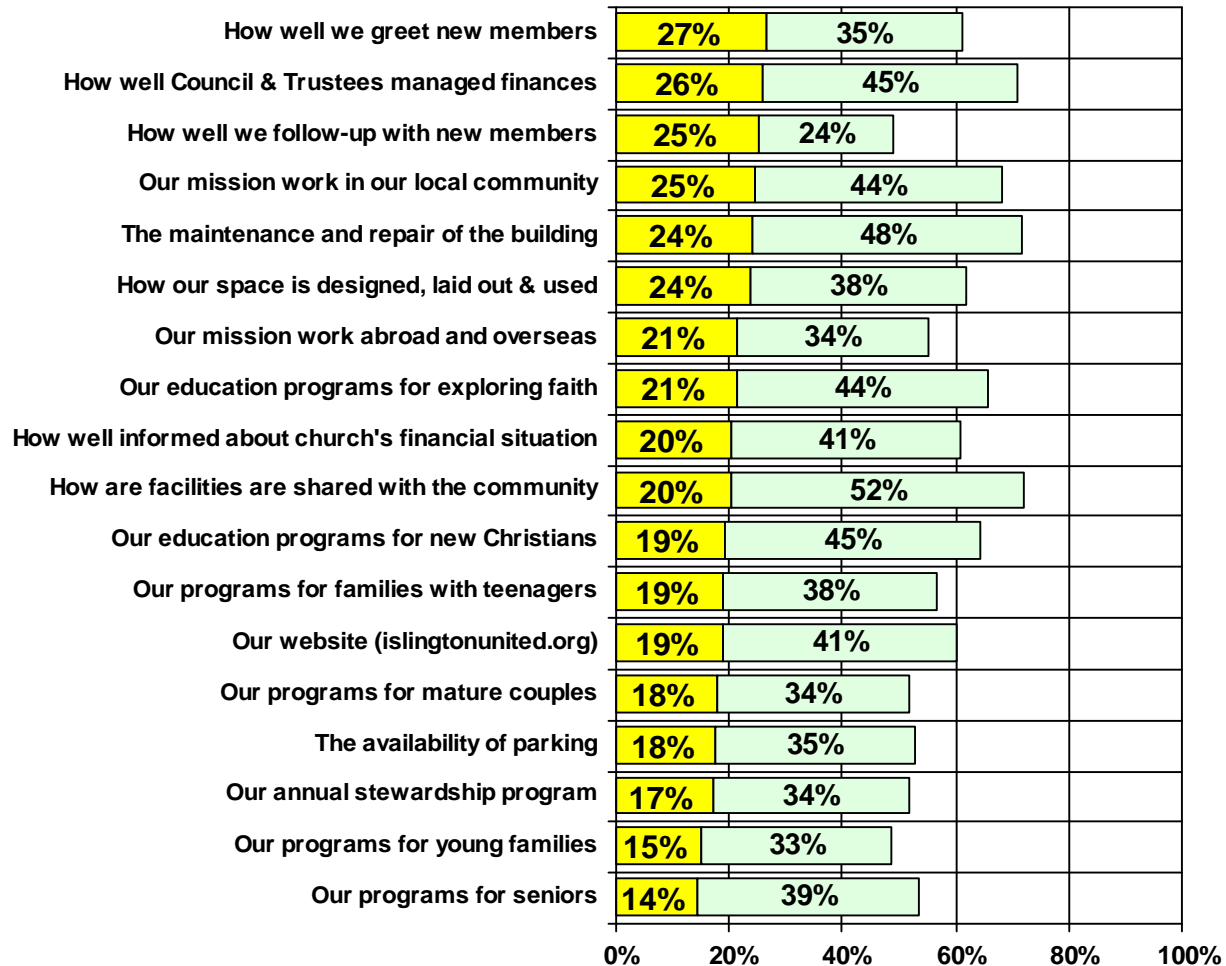


Our music programs, hospitality, pastoral care and facility management are areas where we are most often perceived to be doing well.

■ Excellent
■ Very Good

Programs and Facilities

Other Areas Where We Do Well

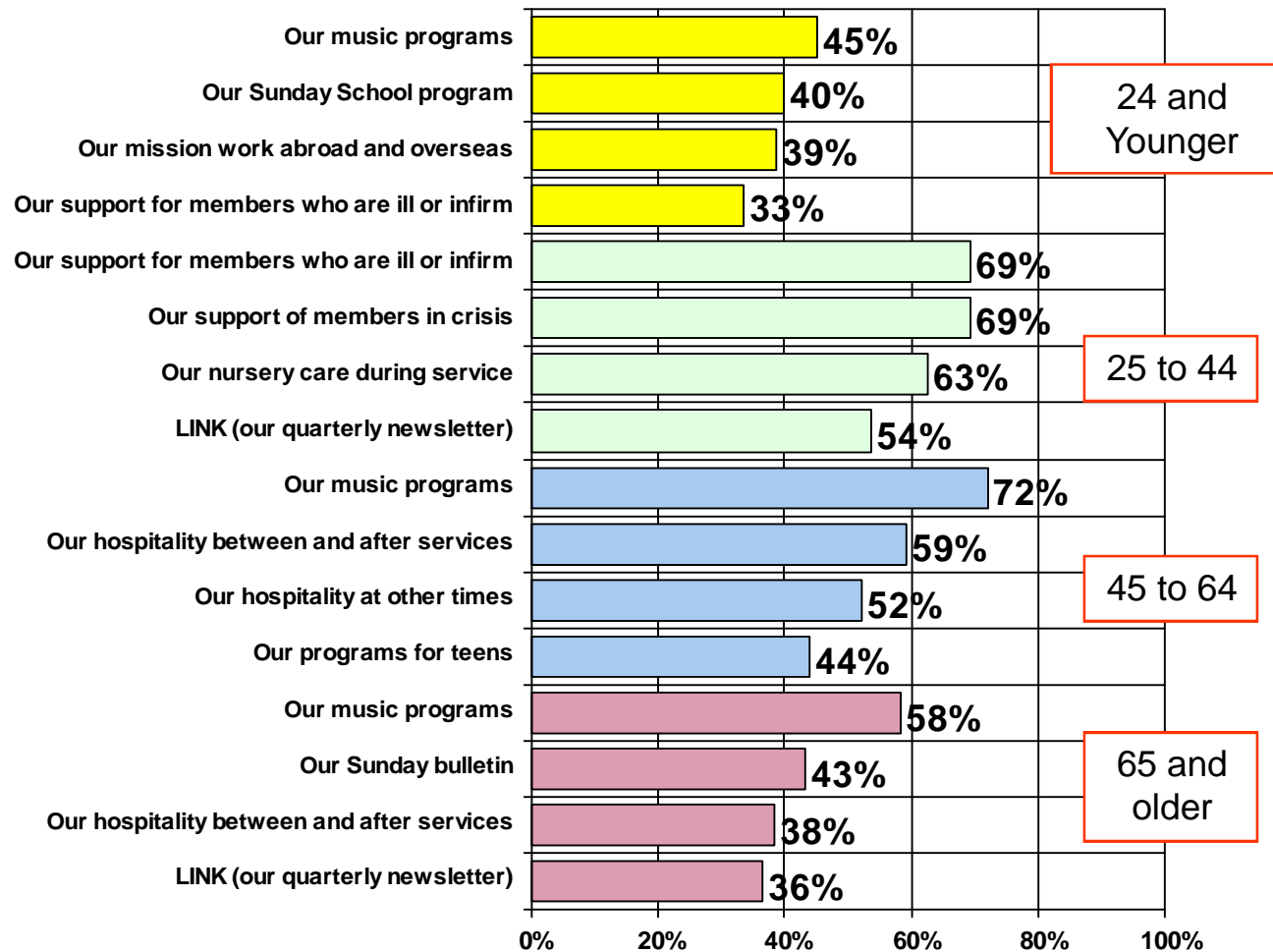


Our Sunday School program, mission outreach, Christian education and programs for mature and senior members are also rated positively by the majority of members.

■ Excellent
■ Very Good

Programs and Facilities

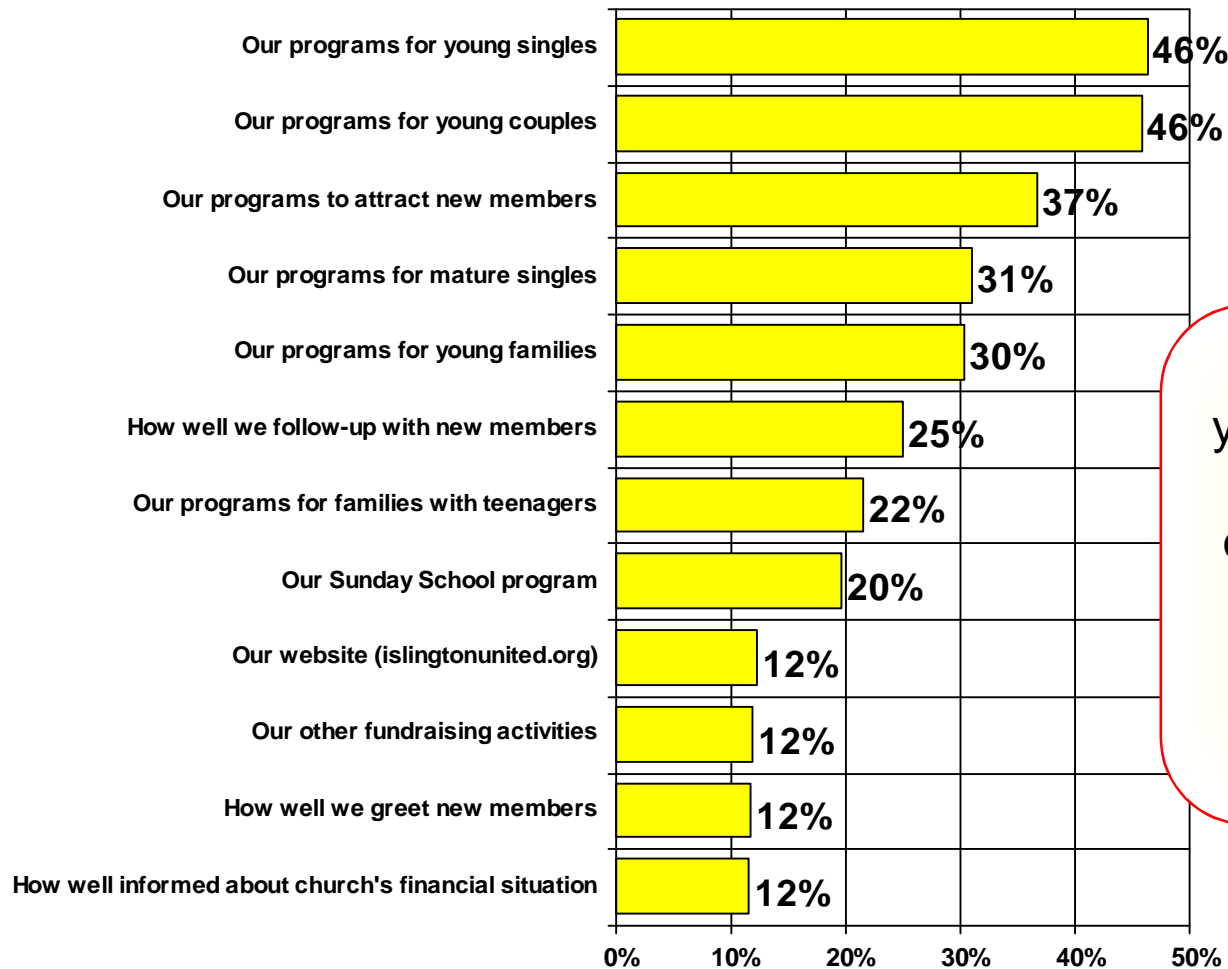
Areas Most Often Rated as Excellent: By Age



While most considered our music program to be excellent, there is wide variation by age as to what other aspects of Islington United are considered excellent.

Programs and Facilities

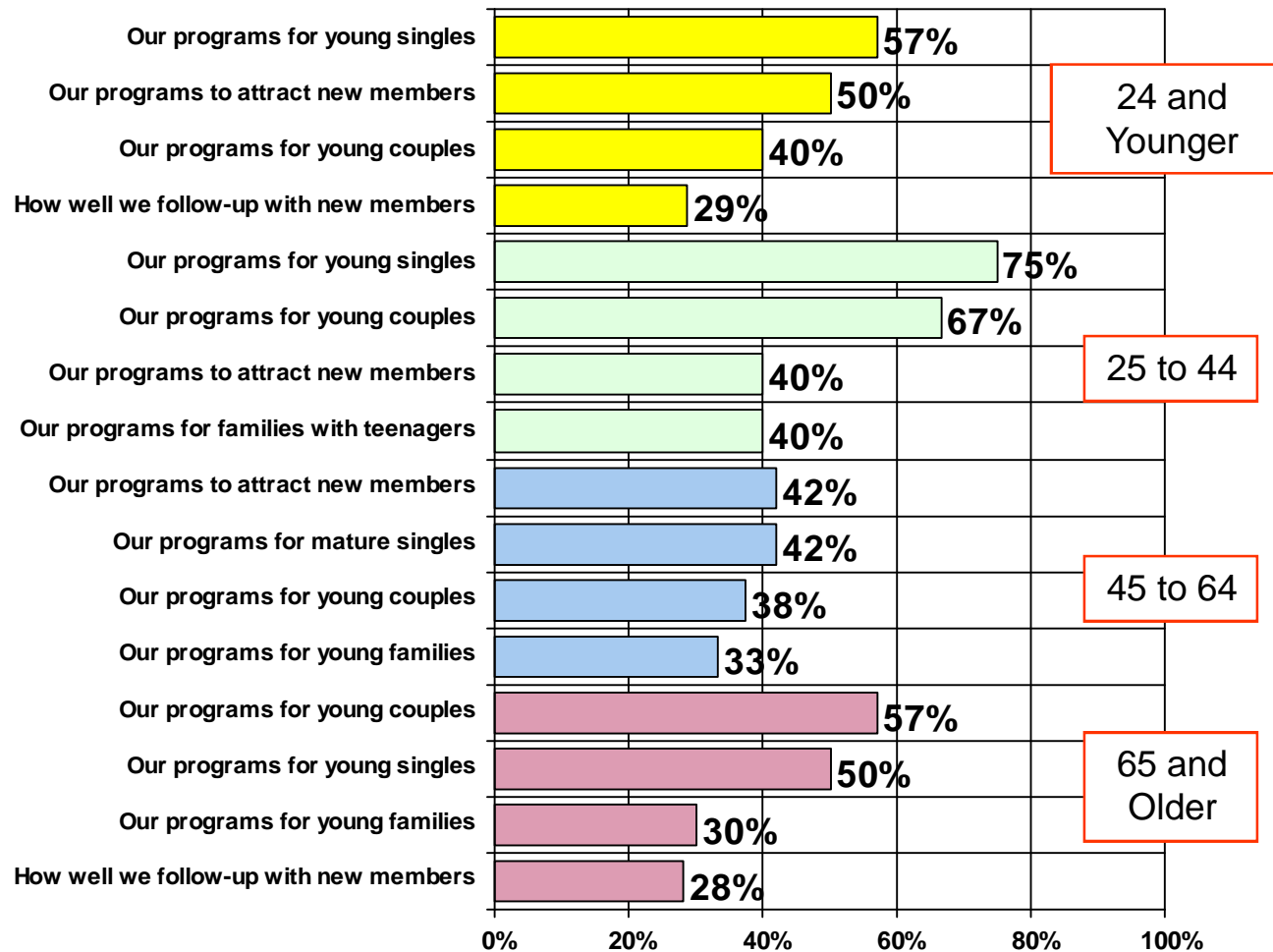
Areas Most Often Rated “Needs Improvement”



Programs for younger people, and mature singles and our efforts to attract new members are areas most often considered to need improvement

Programs and Facilities

Areas Most Often Rated “Needs Improvement”: By Age



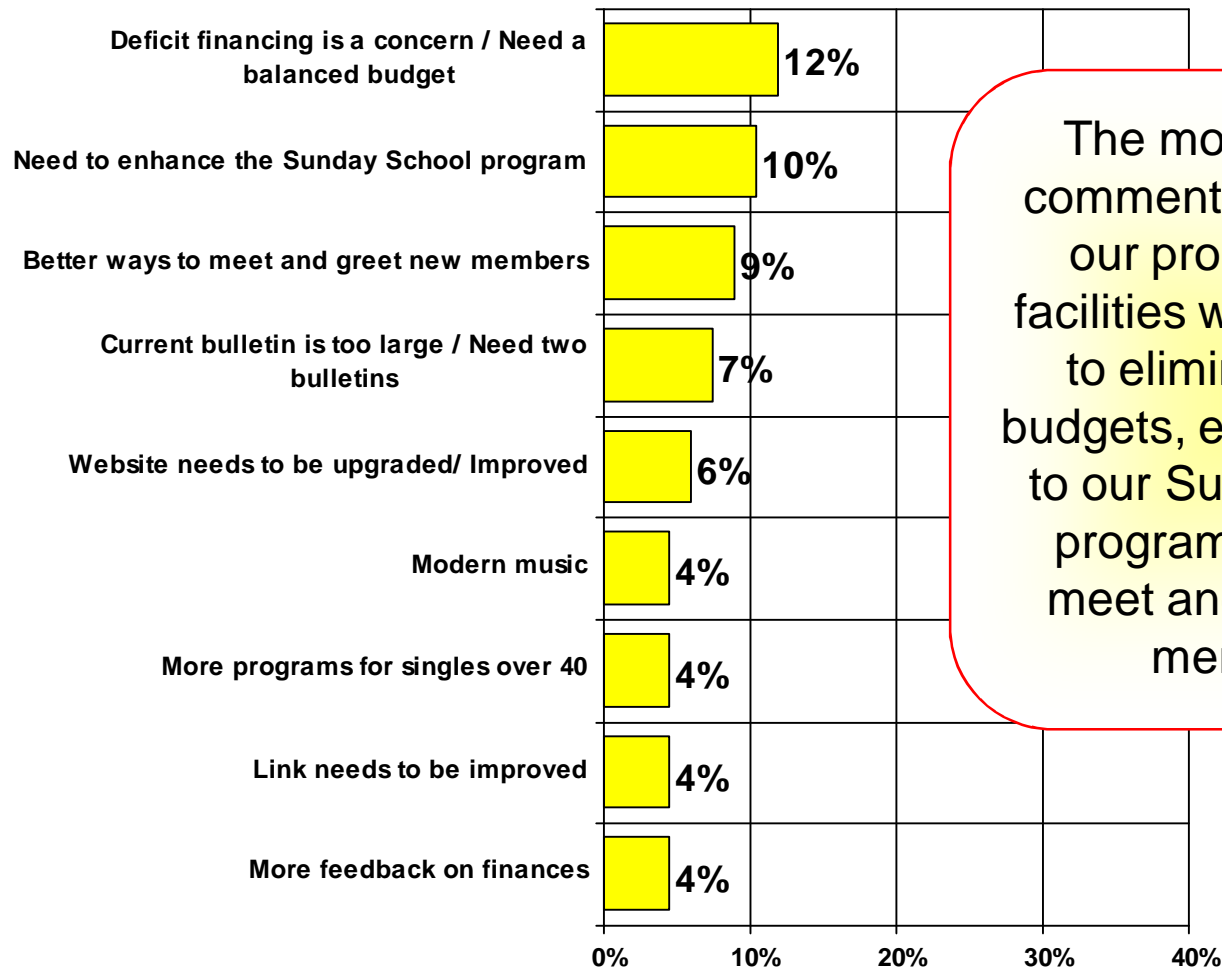
There is a general consensus across all age groups that our programs for younger people and efforts to attract new members are most in need of improvement.





Comments Regarding Programs & Facilities

Based on 67 Responses

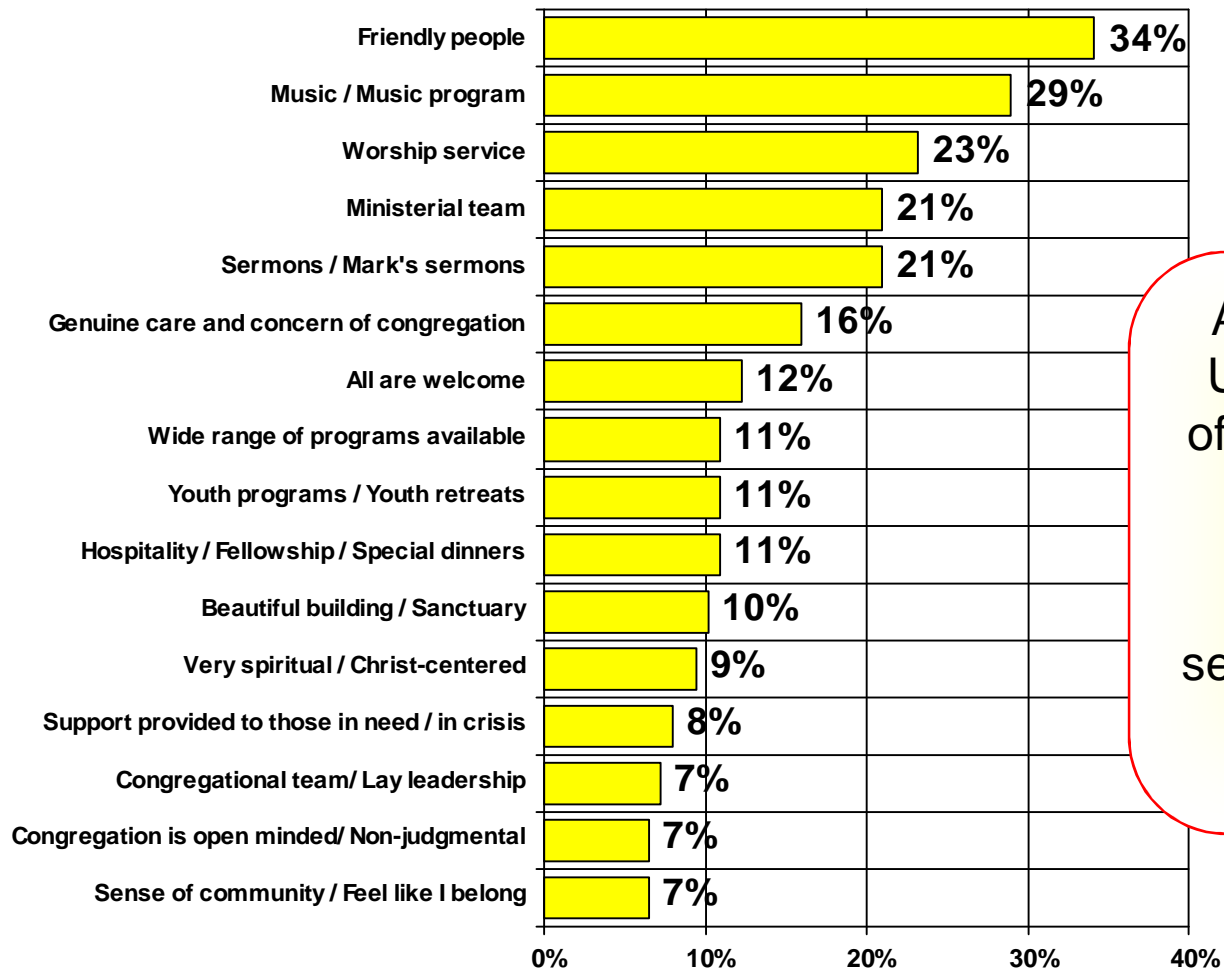


The most frequent comments concerning our programs and facilities were the need to eliminate deficit budgets, enhancements to our Sunday School program and better meet and greet new members.

What Do You Like Best About Islington?

Most Frequently Mentioned Likes

Based on 138 Responses

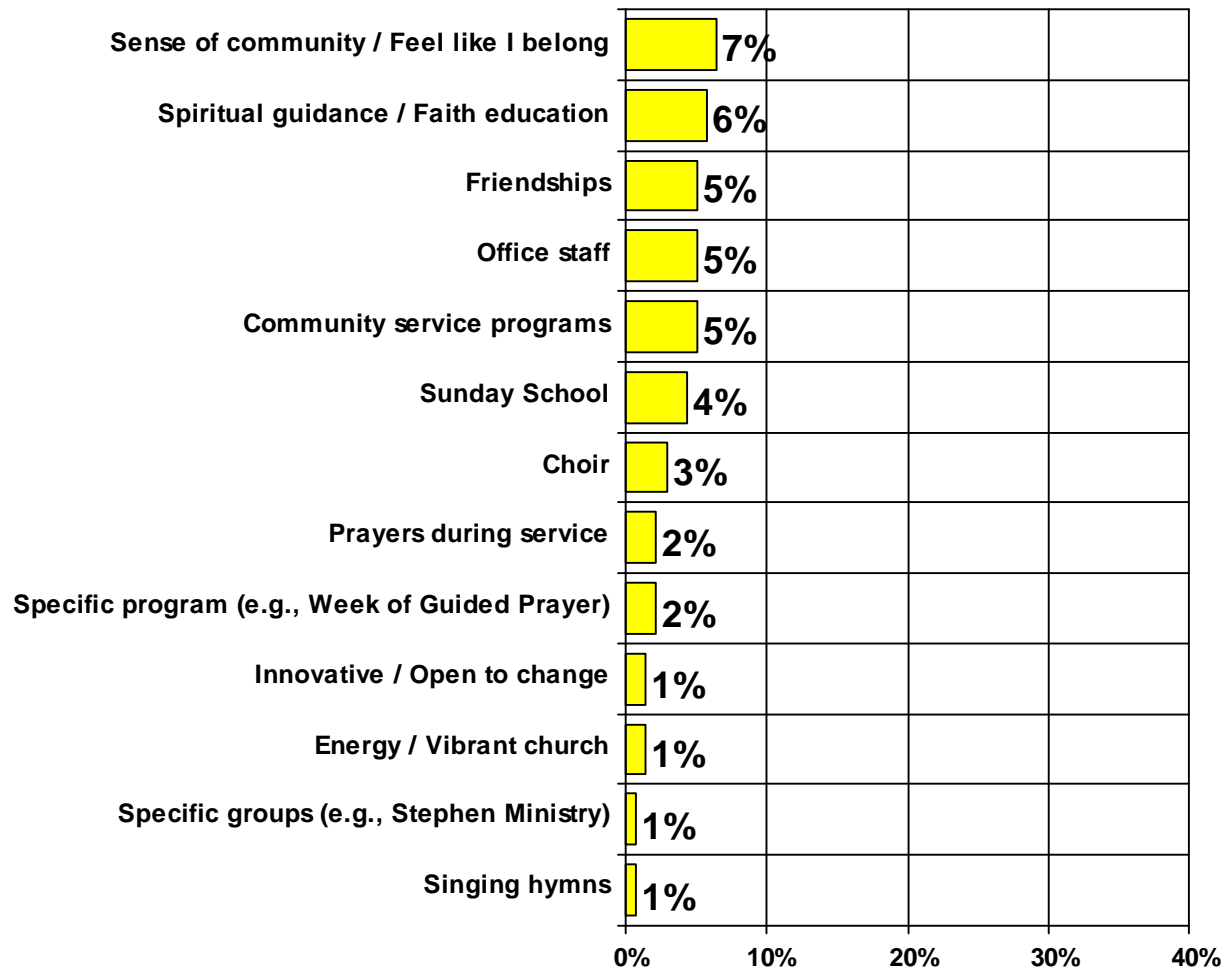


Aspects of Islington United Church most often liked include the friendliness of the people, the music program, worship service, the ministerial team and Sunday morning sermons.

What Do You Like Best About Islington?

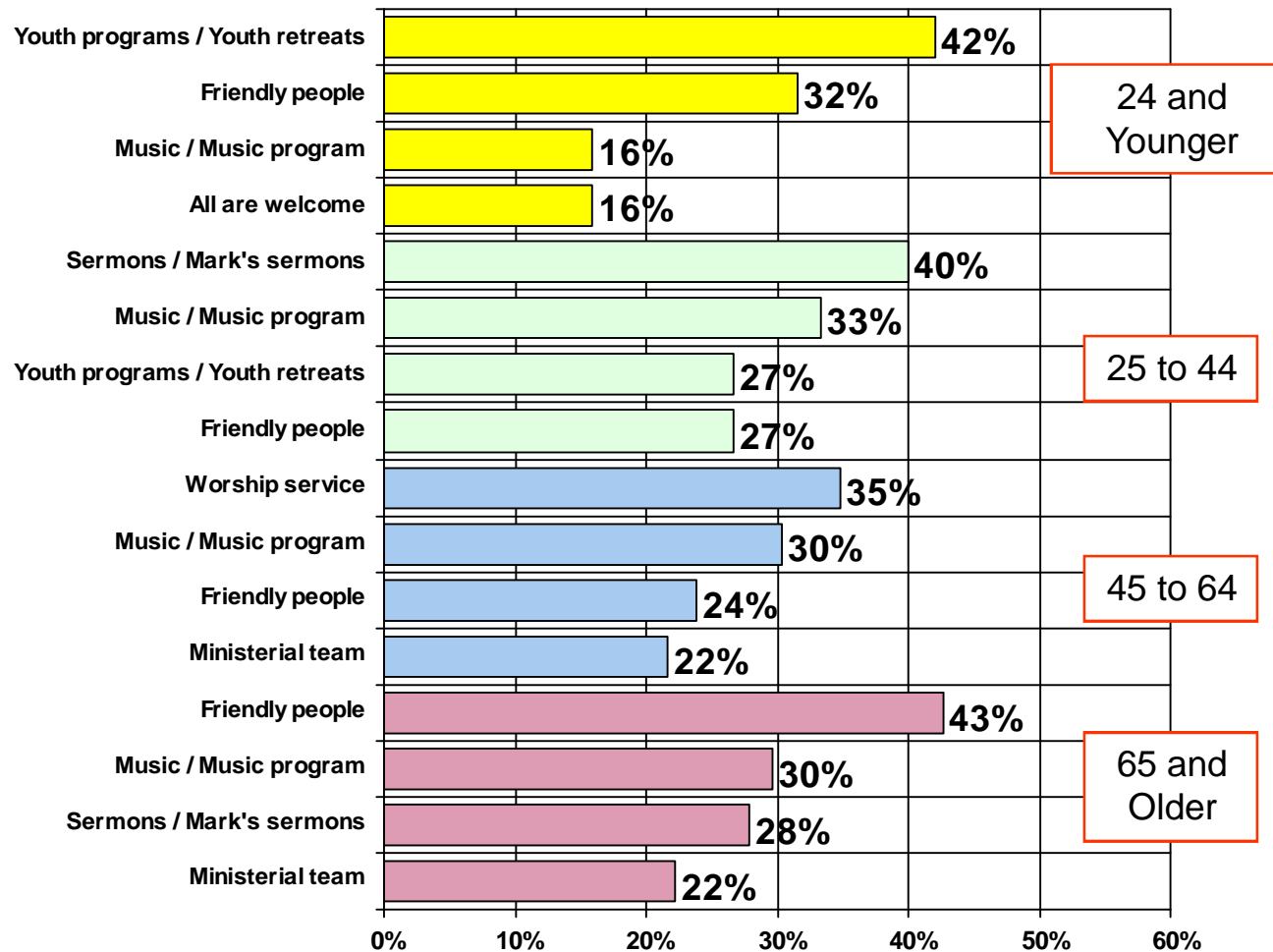
Other Mentioned Likes

Based on 138 Responses



What Do You Like Best About Islington?

Most Frequently Mentioned Likes: By Age

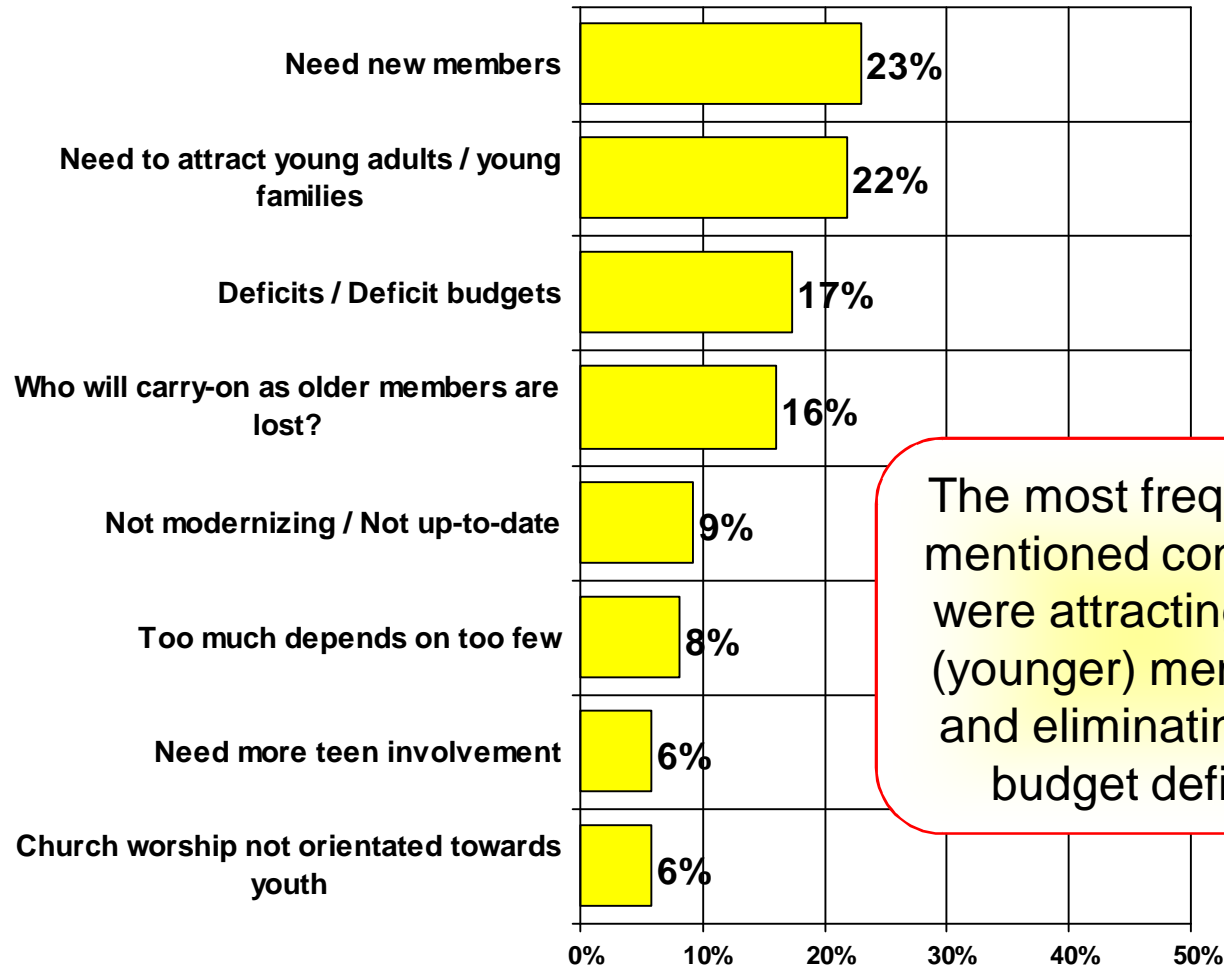


All age groups indicated that they enjoyed the friendliness of the people and the music program. Sermons were generally better liked those over 25, while those 44 and younger tends to mentioned that the Youth Programs were well liked.

What Concerns Do You Have About Islington?

Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns

Based on 87 Responses

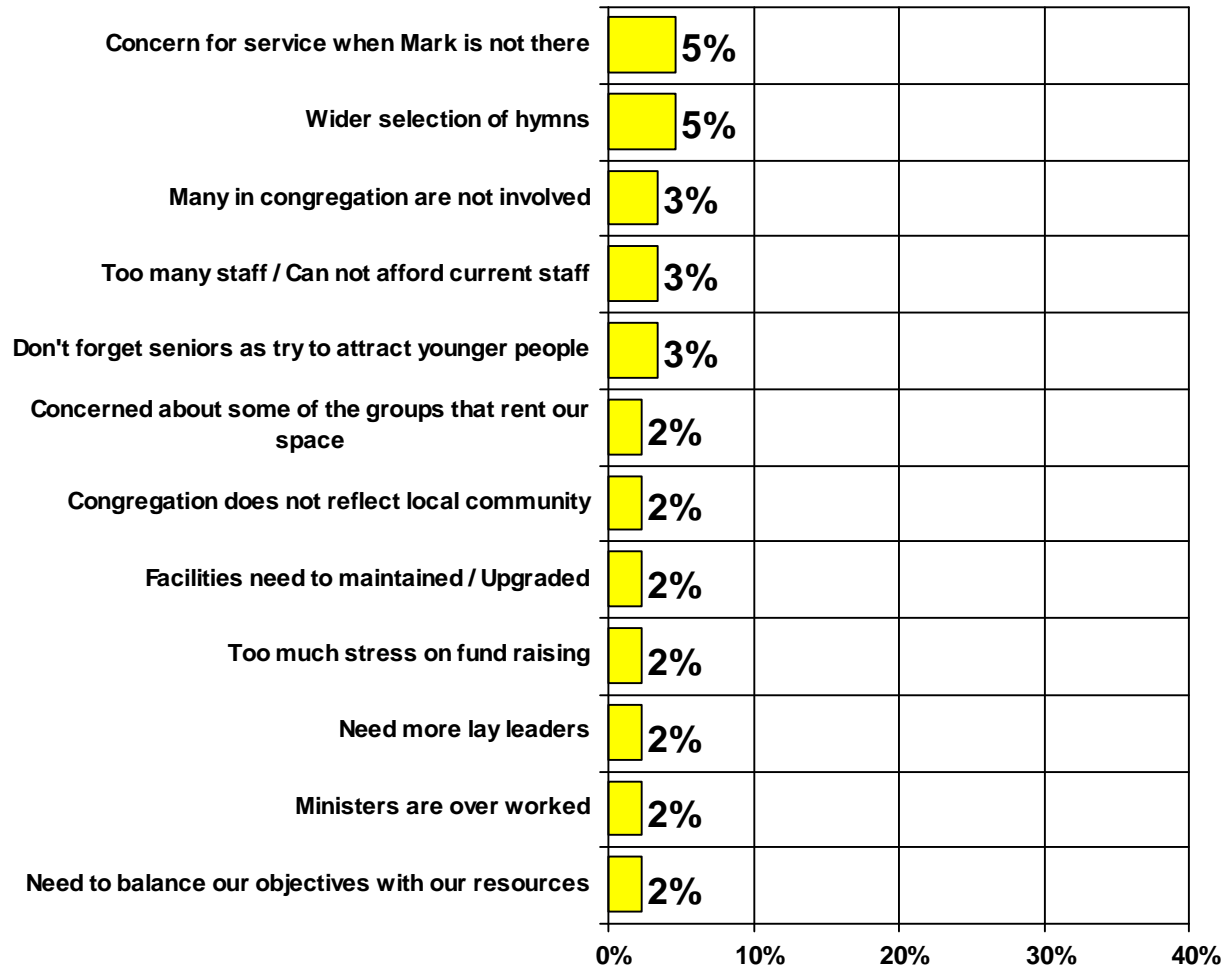


The most frequently mentioned concerns were attracting new (younger) members and eliminating the budget deficit.

What Concerns Do You Have About Islington?

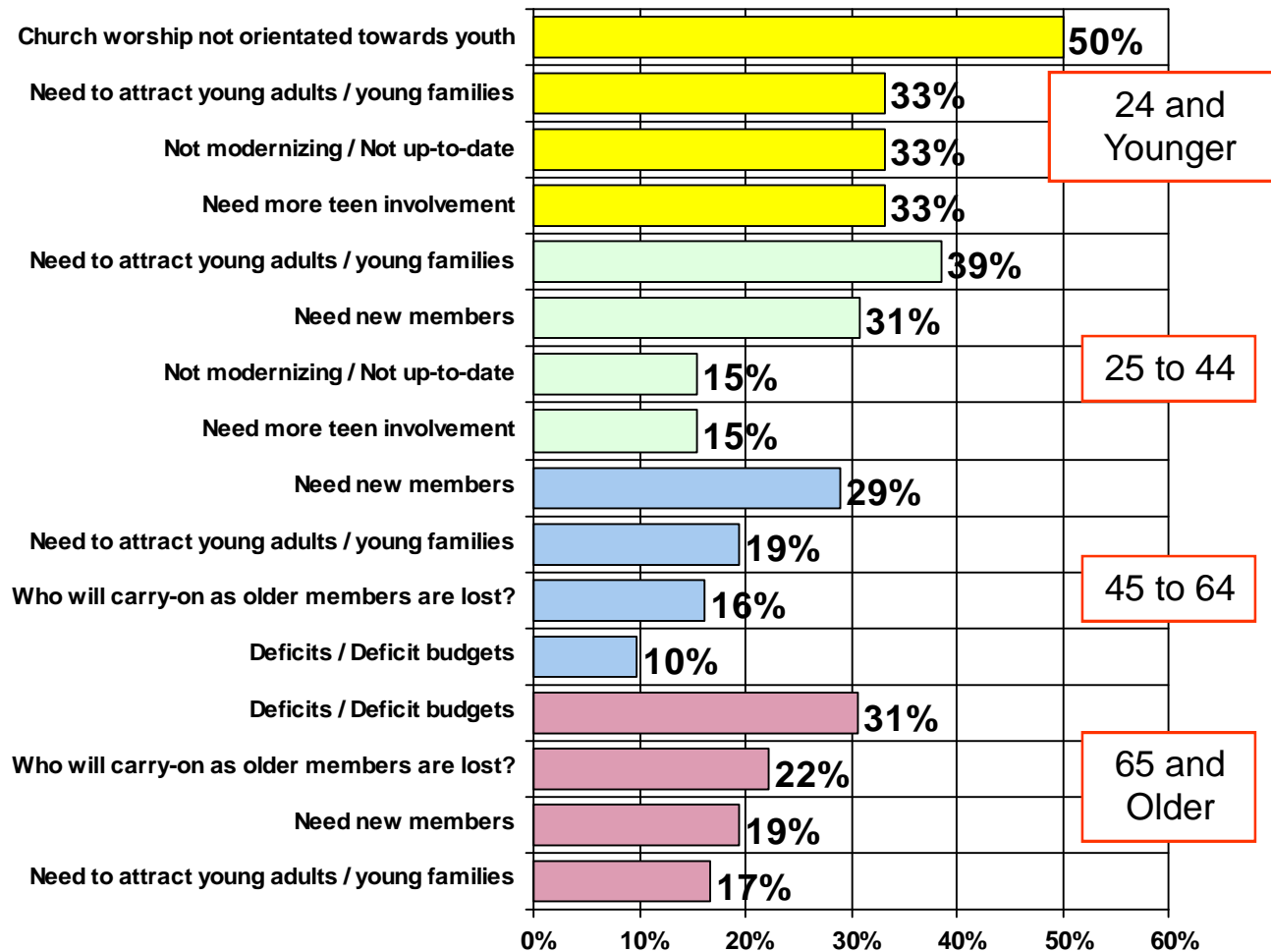
Other Concerns Mentioned

Based on 87 Members



What Concerns Do You Have About Islington?

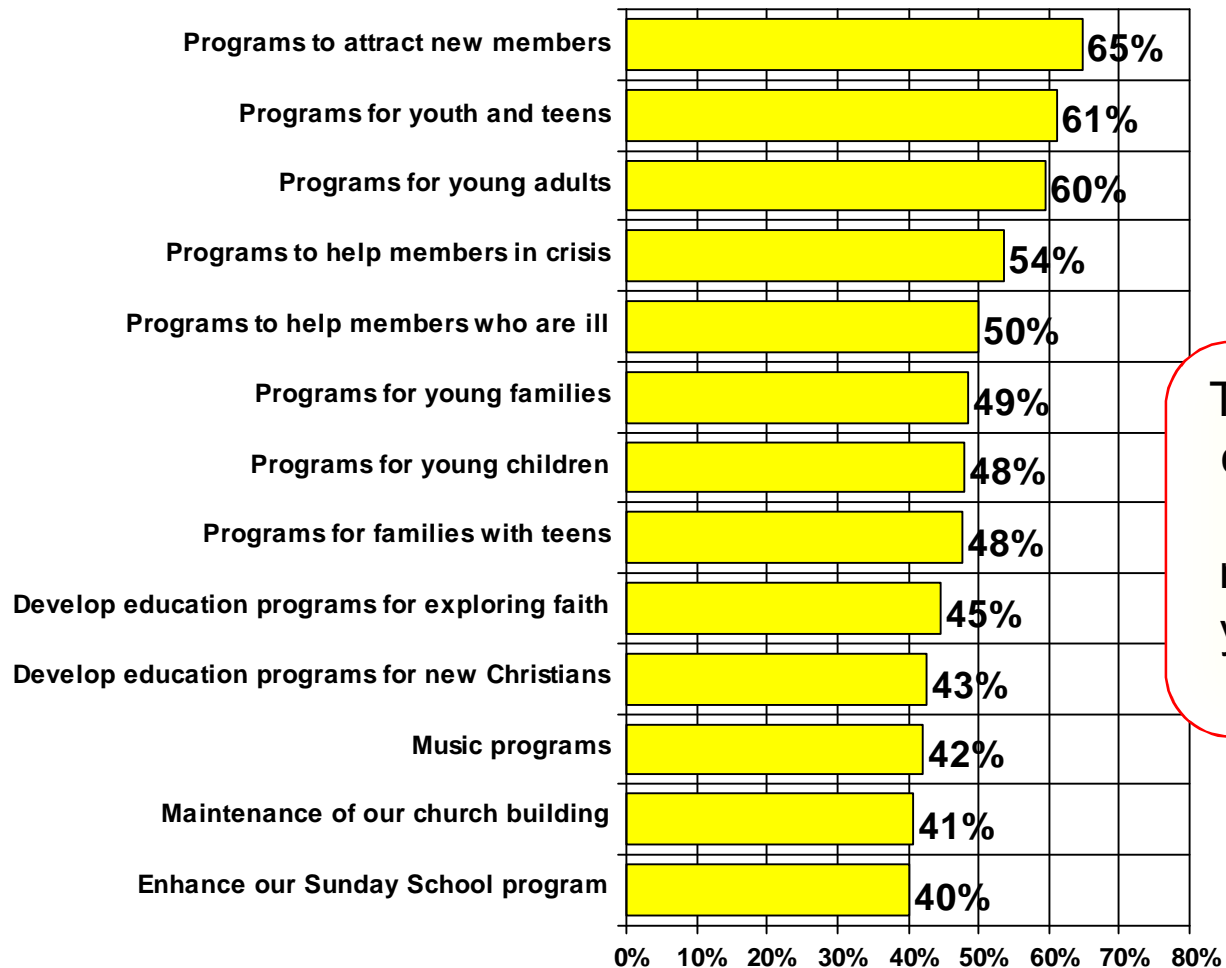
Most Frequently Mentioned Concerns: By Age



The need to attract new members, and especially younger members is a concern to all age groups. However, concern about the deficit budget tends to increase with the age of the individual while younger members are more concerned that the worship service be modernized.

Islington United Church's Future Priorities

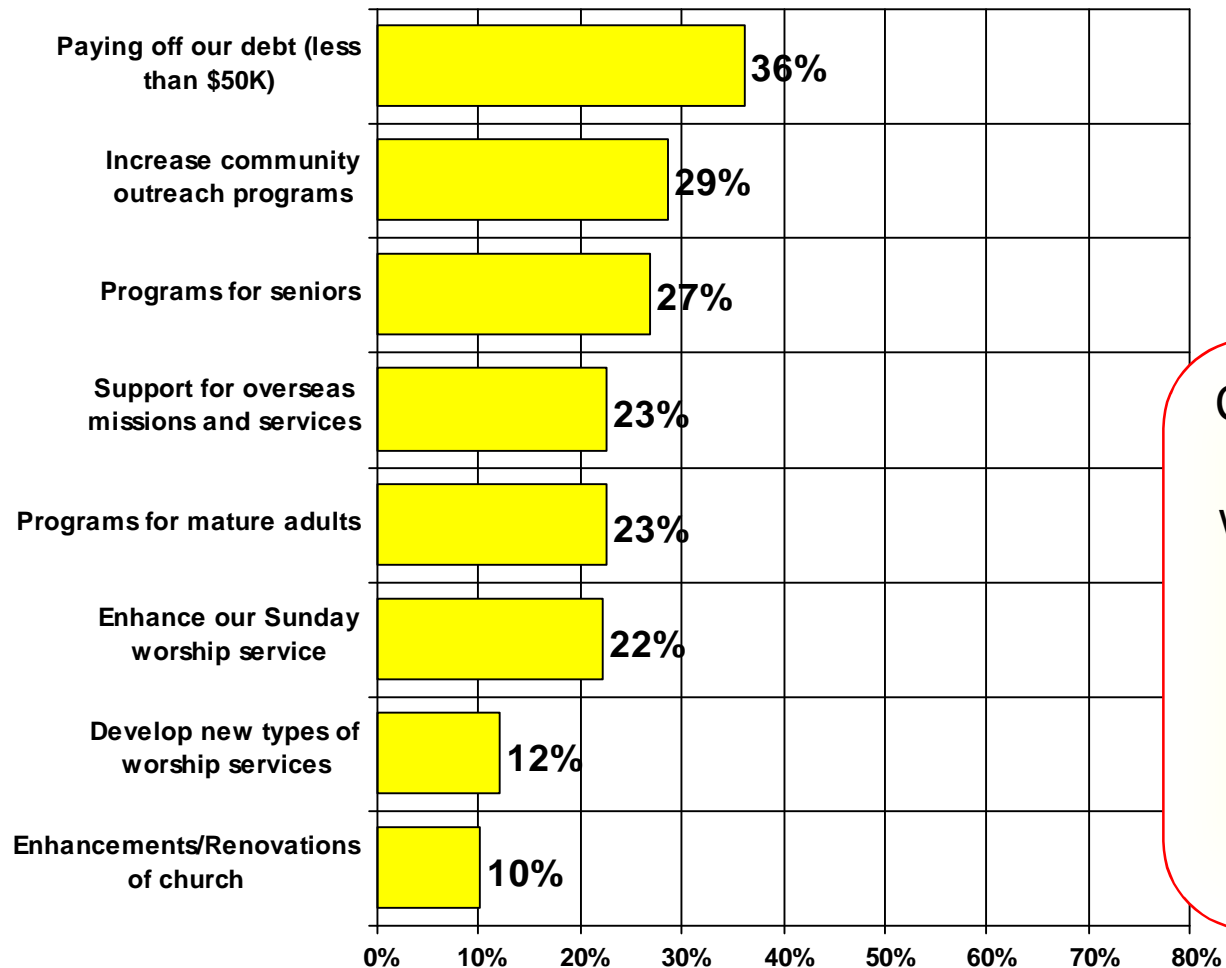
Areas Most Often Rated "High Priority"



The activities most often considered high priority include attracting new members, programs for youth and young adults and pastoral care.

Islington United Church's Future Priorities

Areas Less Often Rated "High Priority"

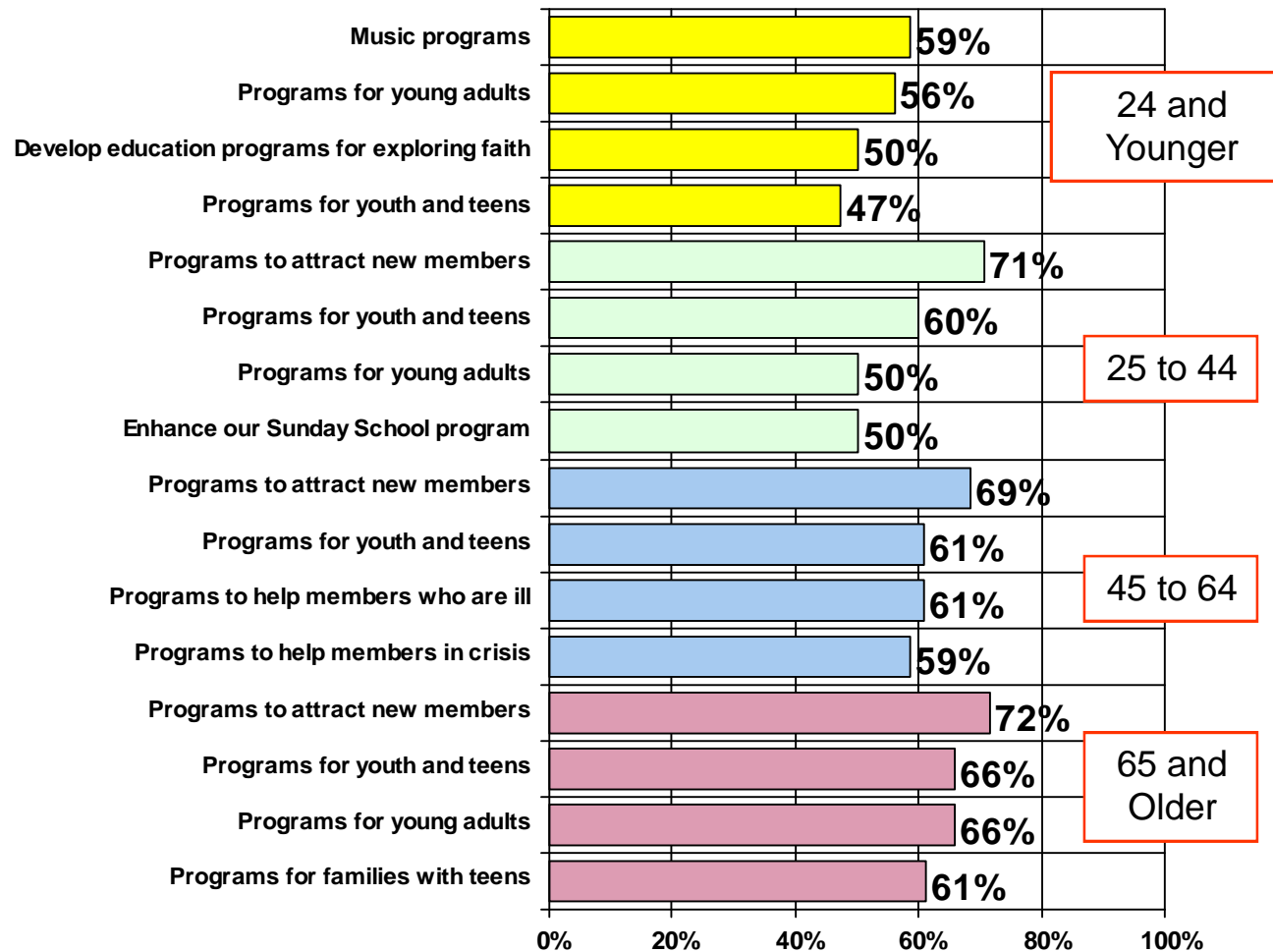


Church renovations, changes to the worship service and paying off debt are less often considered high priority by the majority of members.



Islington United Church's Future Priorities

Areas Most Often Rated "High Priority": By Age

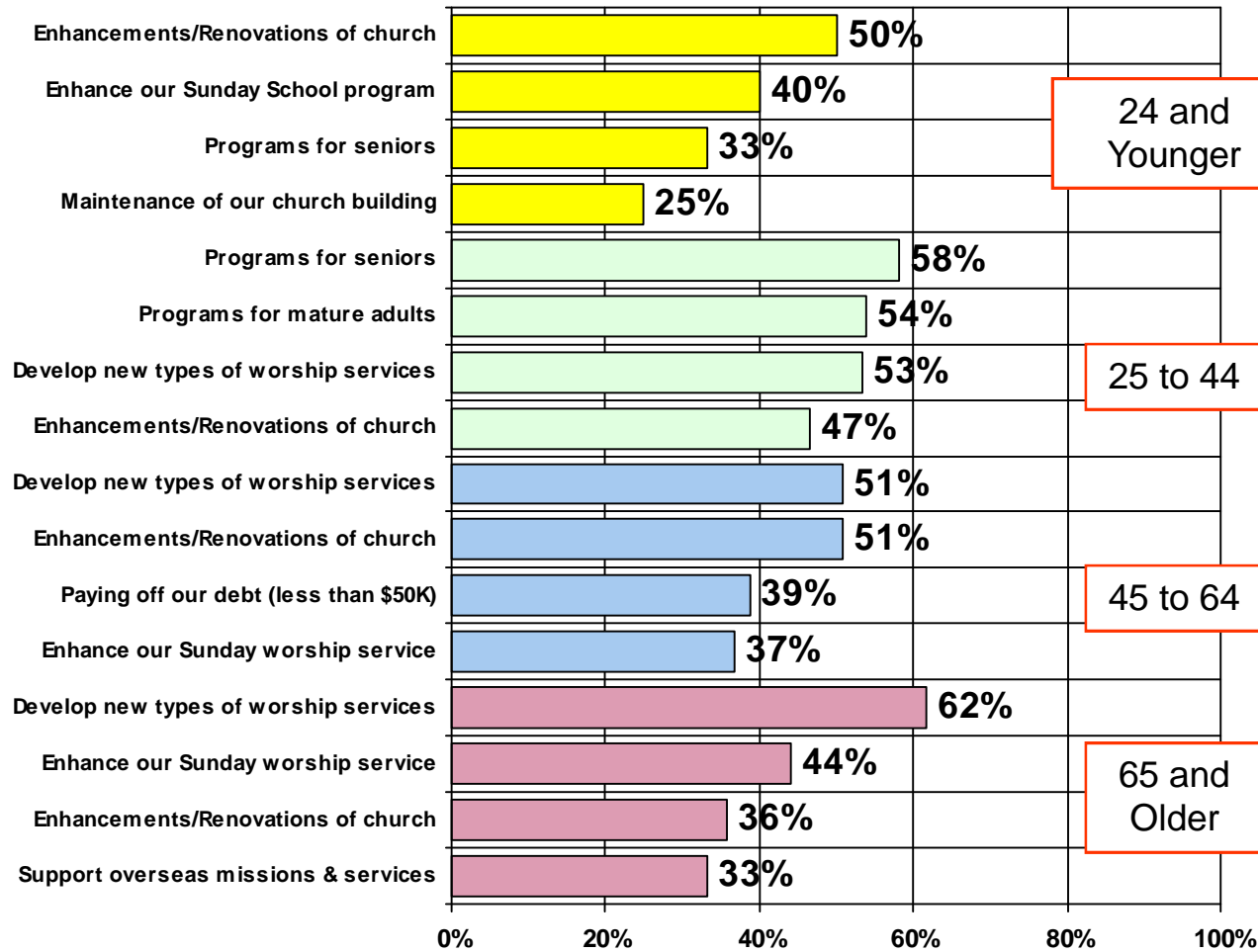


Attracting new members was the highest priority for those 25 and older. There is also a strong consensus across the age groups that programs for teens and young adults are a high priority. Those 45 to 64 felt that pastoral care was one of their highest priorities.



Islington United Church's Future Priorities

Areas Most Often Rated "Low Priority": By Age

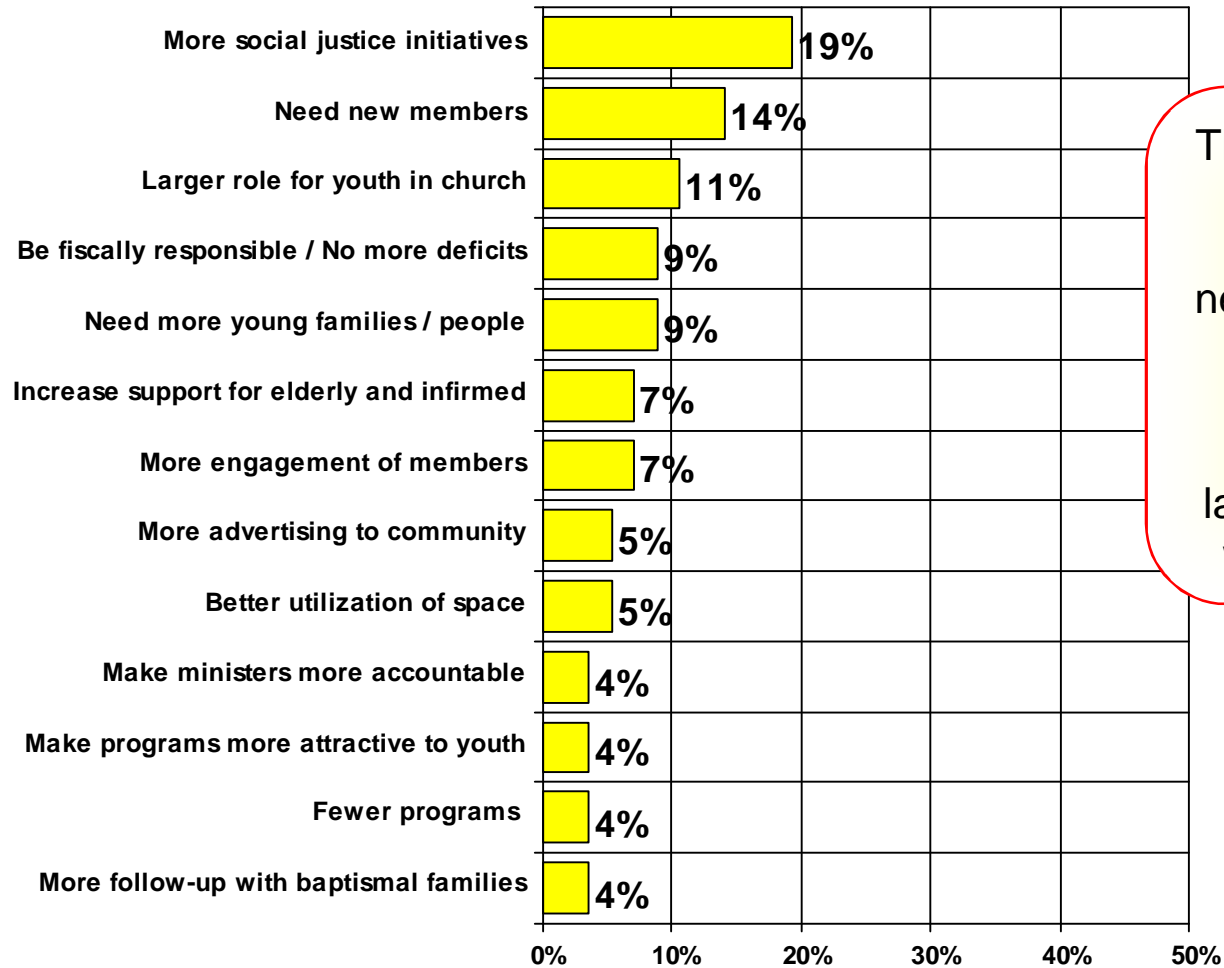


Church renovations and enhancements were considered a low priority by all age groups. The need to develop an alternative worship service was progressively rated as less important as the age of the individual increased.

Islington United Church's Future Priorities

Other Priorities Mentioned

Based on 57 Members

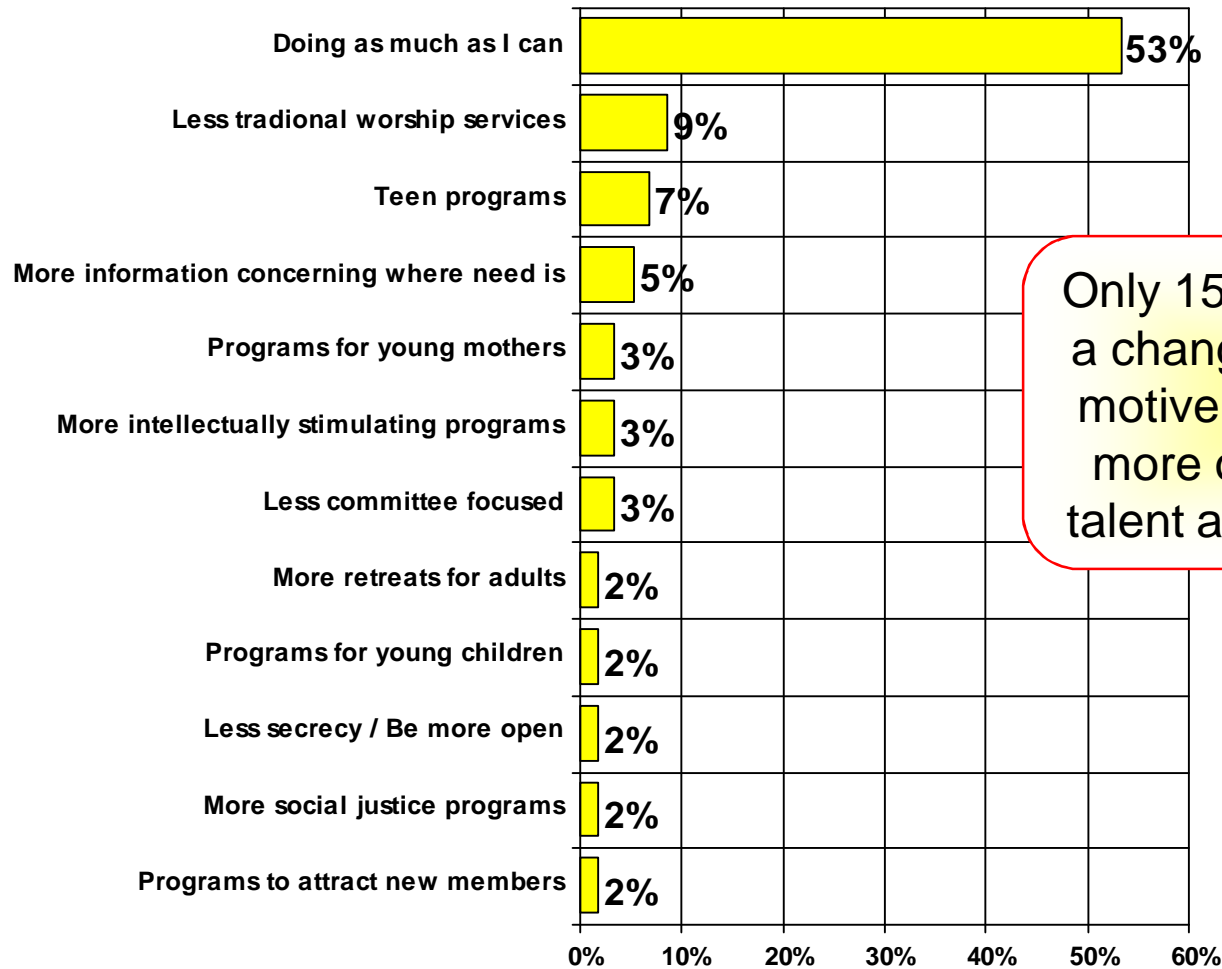


The most commonly mentioned other priorities was the need for more social justice programs, the need for new members and a larger role for youth within the church.

What Change Would Motivate You to Give More?

Changes Which Would Motivate Action

Based on 58 Members



Only 15% mentioned a change that would motivate them to give more of their time, talent and treasures.