

WEBVTT

1

00:00:00.025 --> 00:00:00.245

Yes.

2

00:00:00.255 --> 00:00:03.925

Hello. I see that we've got, we've got 17 people in so far.

3

00:00:04.205 --> 00:00:06.285

I am Nancy McDonald Lad.

4

00:00:06.425 --> 00:00:08.445

I'm our Director of Communications

5

00:00:08.505 --> 00:00:10.925

and Public Ministry here at the UUA.

6

00:00:11.465 --> 00:00:13.045

And in just another minute

7

00:00:13.105 --> 00:00:16.325

or two we will introduce the, the trio of folks

8

00:00:16.325 --> 00:00:19.685

who have been working to both gather and interpret,

9

00:00:20.265 --> 00:00:24.725

and then in turn, present that data, including Larry,

10

00:00:24.725 --> 00:00:26.485

could you introduce yourself really quickly?

11

00:00:29.045 --> 00:00:30.825

I'd be happy to. My name is Larry Stoff.

12

00:00:30.925 --> 00:00:33.985

Uh, I'm the director of IT here at the UUA.

13

00:00:34.405 --> 00:00:37.785

And, uh, me and my team help pull the certification data

14
00:00:38.065 --> 00:00:40.065
together and compile it into this report

15
00:00:40.065 --> 00:00:41.465
that we are gonna be presenting today.

16
00:00:43.245 --> 00:00:44.585
And Megan, could you go ahead

17
00:00:44.585 --> 00:00:45.825
and introduce yourself as well?

18
00:00:47.225 --> 00:00:48.845
Hey folks, I'm Megan Foley.

19
00:00:49.005 --> 00:00:52.045
I am the Deputy Director for Congregational Life, um,

20
00:00:52.185 --> 00:00:55.325
at this stage of my multiple hats wearing.

21
00:00:55.785 --> 00:00:58.245
Um, and so the director, Jessica York

22
00:00:58.305 --> 00:01:01.885
and I oversee the, what you might know as regional staff

23
00:01:01.905 --> 00:01:04.525
or field staff, the folks that are directly, uh,

24
00:01:04.525 --> 00:01:06.925
supporting your congregation, uh, in the field.

25
00:01:07.265 --> 00:01:09.445
Um, so that's the role I'm taking today.

26
00:01:10.915 --> 00:01:13.755
Fabulous. And I will be kicking us off here in a second.

27

00:01:14.155 --> 00:01:17.795

I do wanna let us know that I think we will probably open up

28

00:01:18.225 --> 00:01:20.035

chat 'cause it's a small enough group.

29

00:01:20.335 --> 00:01:21.475

We may or may not be able

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00:01:21.475 --> 00:01:23.675

to actively monitor chat the entire time.

31

00:01:24.135 --> 00:01:26.435

Um, but we'll do our best to keep up with it.

32

00:01:26.855 --> 00:01:30.755

And I assume people will be coming in as we proceed.

33

00:01:30.815 --> 00:01:32.995

And do note that we have a second one of these

34

00:01:33.555 --> 00:01:35.235

webinars in addition to this one.

35

00:01:35.655 --> 00:01:37.635

So if you find this information helpful

36

00:01:37.695 --> 00:01:40.075

or you wanna make sure that people in your con context

37

00:01:40.215 --> 00:01:42.275

or your congregation are involved,

38

00:01:42.685 --> 00:01:44.835

we'll have a whole second round of, um,

39

00:01:44.835 --> 00:01:48.075

pushing out publicity for ways for people to register.

40

00:01:48.535 --> 00:01:49.995

And as we gather, I'm gonna go ahead

41
00:01:49.995 --> 00:01:53.915
and start us, um, with a chalice lighting as we do,

42
00:01:54.305 --> 00:01:57.755
grounding ourselves in our faith tradition.

43
00:01:57.935 --> 00:02:02.835
And Betty's reminding us that chat is indeed now open.

44
00:02:03.655 --> 00:02:08.355
So our chaid for today is, uh,

45
00:02:08.825 --> 00:02:11.715
from the wonderful John O'Donohue

46
00:02:12.655 --> 00:02:17.315
and he calls it a blessing for one who holds power.

47
00:02:18.015 --> 00:02:20.395
And even in times when we feel so deeply powerless,

48
00:02:20.555 --> 00:02:22.395
I think there is great power in progressive faith

49
00:02:23.095 --> 00:02:24.475
and for all of us within it.

50
00:02:24.475 --> 00:02:25.595
So I've lit my chalice.

51
00:02:26.455 --> 00:02:29.795
But o Donahue says, may the gift of leadership

52
00:02:31.135 --> 00:02:33.595
awaken in you as a vocation.

53
00:02:34.585 --> 00:02:38.475
Keep you mindful of the providence that calls you to serve

54

00:02:39.455 --> 00:02:42.555

as high over the mountains as an eagle spreads its wings.

55

00:02:43.135 --> 00:02:46.195

May your perspective be larger than the view from the

56

00:02:46.265 --> 00:02:51.195

foothills when the way is flat in times of dull endurance.

57

00:02:51.495 --> 00:02:53.755

May your imagination evoke a horizon

58

00:02:54.825 --> 00:02:57.955

when thirst burns in times of drought, may you be blessed

59

00:02:58.095 --> 00:03:00.885

to find the wells and dig them for others.

60

00:03:01.705 --> 00:03:04.165

May you have the wisdom to read time clearly

61

00:03:04.745 --> 00:03:05.925

and know when the seeds

62

00:03:05.925 --> 00:03:09.165

of change can truly flourish in your heart.

63

00:03:09.165 --> 00:03:12.845

They may, there may be a sanctuary for the stillness

64

00:03:13.095 --> 00:03:14.525

where clarity is born.

65

00:03:15.585 --> 00:03:18.125

May your work be infused with creativity,

66

00:03:18.785 --> 00:03:20.525

and may you have the wisdom to balance,

67

00:03:20.735 --> 00:03:22.125

compassion and challenge.

68
00:03:23.065 --> 00:03:27.365
May your soul find the graciousness to rise above the fester

69
00:03:27.385 --> 00:03:29.045
of small mediocrities.

70
00:03:29.905 --> 00:03:31.525
May your power never be a shell

71
00:03:31.525 --> 00:03:34.005
where your heart would silently atrophy.

72
00:03:35.025 --> 00:03:39.205
May you welcome your own vulnerability as the ground

73
00:03:39.215 --> 00:03:43.895
where healing and truth join may integrity

74
00:03:44.075 --> 00:03:48.615
of soul be your first ideal, the source that will guide

75
00:03:48.995 --> 00:03:50.615
and bless you in your work.

76
00:03:51.675 --> 00:03:54.855
So in that spirit, I consider us gathered

77
00:03:55.235 --> 00:03:56.375
and I will go ahead

78
00:03:56.375 --> 00:03:58.895
and sort of set the, um,

79
00:04:01.025 --> 00:04:03.015
stage, I suppose, um,

80
00:04:03.955 --> 00:04:06.095
and let us know sort of

81

00:04:06.205 --> 00:04:08.535
what it is we're here to present to you.

82
00:04:08.535 --> 00:04:09.575
And then we'll start to give you some

83
00:04:09.575 --> 00:04:11.415
of the details at the end.

84
00:04:11.715 --> 00:04:15.375
We will open the space for questions in the chat.

85
00:04:15.595 --> 00:04:18.615
And if you see Megan and Larry and I sort of looking back

86
00:04:18.615 --> 00:04:20.095
and forth at one another, that's

87
00:04:20.095 --> 00:04:21.655
because we're trying to figure out which

88
00:04:21.665 --> 00:04:23.415
among us is the one most equipped

89
00:04:23.415 --> 00:04:25.095
to answer the question you might have

90
00:04:25.275 --> 00:04:29.015
or to follow up later on with an answer to your question.

91
00:04:29.475 --> 00:04:33.775
So the tool that we are here to present to you tonight is

92
00:04:33.875 --> 00:04:35.655
by no means an exhaustive tool

93
00:04:35.655 --> 00:04:37.335
that tells you everything you need

94
00:04:37.335 --> 00:04:39.655
to know about all the data, um,

95
00:04:39.915 --> 00:04:43.655
within our Unitarian Universalist larger ecosystem.

96
00:04:44.315 --> 00:04:47.255
But what it does is give us a snapshot

97
00:04:47.475 --> 00:04:49.295
of the very best information

98
00:04:49.295 --> 00:04:51.535
that our congregations are willing

99
00:04:51.715 --> 00:04:55.375
and able in a fairly, um, streamlined

100
00:04:55.375 --> 00:04:58.655
and not too laborious way to report out about themselves.

101
00:04:59.475 --> 00:05:01.055
The intention here is

102
00:05:01.055 --> 00:05:05.015
that if we are grounded in good information, in clear

103
00:05:05.155 --> 00:05:08.415
and clean data, then we can give ourselves the work

104
00:05:08.415 --> 00:05:10.695
of interpreting that data

105
00:05:11.475 --> 00:05:15.295
and then build from that the kind of courageous strategies,

106
00:05:15.675 --> 00:05:17.415
the kind of strategic courage

107
00:05:17.885 --> 00:05:20.895
that lets us actually meet the moment instead

108

00:05:20.895 --> 00:05:23.935
of just allowing the moment to meet us.

109
00:05:24.355 --> 00:05:25.415
So to be active

110
00:05:25.475 --> 00:05:28.855
and engaged participants in how this rapidly

111
00:05:29.375 --> 00:05:33.295
changing dynamic and indeed profoundly stressful time in

112
00:05:33.295 --> 00:05:37.015
Unitarian universal men in American religion as a whole, um,

113
00:05:37.275 --> 00:05:40.495
is manifesting in our congregations and within the faith.

114
00:05:41.035 --> 00:05:44.735
So you will see when we put the, um, the CER

115
00:05:45.335 --> 00:05:47.495
certification report in the chat, actually, Larry,

116
00:05:47.495 --> 00:05:49.615
if you would put the whole report itself in the chat,

117
00:05:49.645 --> 00:05:52.095
that would be great that one of the things we started

118
00:05:52.115 --> 00:05:54.535
to do last year and are doing this year is

119
00:05:54.535 --> 00:05:57.405
what I call an executive summary, which is just trying

120
00:05:57.405 --> 00:05:58.565
to pull some narrative

121
00:05:58.585 --> 00:06:01.245
and some synthesis out of the data that you're looking at.

122

00:06:01.665 --> 00:06:03.365

And there are just a couple points I wanna make

123

00:06:03.365 --> 00:06:04.685

before we really kick it off.

124

00:06:05.145 --> 00:06:07.685

The first is that it is impossible

125

00:06:07.685 --> 00:06:11.045

to imper interpret all this data without placing it in the

126

00:06:11.045 --> 00:06:13.325

larger social and political

127

00:06:13.905 --> 00:06:18.065

and, um, um, stressful

128

00:06:18.245 --> 00:06:20.945

and change changing environment around us.

129

00:06:21.605 --> 00:06:23.985

It is a time of great societal disruption

130

00:06:24.205 --> 00:06:26.465

and mounting risk to our institutions

131

00:06:26.525 --> 00:06:28.905

and to the practice of progressive religion as a whole.

132

00:06:29.325 --> 00:06:32.105

So one of the things we want to note is that our

133

00:06:32.825 --> 00:06:36.705

institutions, that is our congregations, our communities,

134

00:06:37.085 --> 00:06:39.505

our networks within the larger ecosystem

135

00:06:39.505 --> 00:06:42.785
of Unitarian Universalism need to be digging deep

136
00:06:42.805 --> 00:06:43.945
for the kind of courage

137
00:06:44.415 --> 00:06:47.585
that helps us make good choices in those changing times.

138
00:06:47.725 --> 00:06:51.065
And collectively, we need to understand that the UUA

139
00:06:51.685 --> 00:06:54.505
is the institution that itself holds the heart

140
00:06:54.505 --> 00:06:57.985
of the faith while we in turn in our congregations

141
00:06:58.125 --> 00:07:01.065
and our communities realize the possibility

142
00:07:01.065 --> 00:07:02.505
of the faith in people's lives.

143
00:07:03.285 --> 00:07:07.385
So I wrote in the executive summary, um, that

144
00:07:08.015 --> 00:07:11.145
this year's data, perhaps not predictably,

145
00:07:11.175 --> 00:07:13.665
does not tell a sunny story for easy times

146
00:07:14.055 --> 00:07:18.905
because we are not here to, I don't know, uh, fib

147
00:07:18.905 --> 00:07:20.705
to one another, but to strategically

148
00:07:20.895 --> 00:07:22.785
encounter what's before us.

149

00:07:23.045 --> 00:07:25.865

And these are no easy times on a whole lot of levels.

150

00:07:27.045 --> 00:07:30.625

The data this year really continues longer term trends

151

00:07:31.015 --> 00:07:32.705

that we know put pressure on,

152

00:07:32.705 --> 00:07:34.545

increased pressure on congregational budget

153

00:07:34.795 --> 00:07:35.865

staff and systems.

154

00:07:36.575 --> 00:07:40.585

However, when you look across the board at the information

155

00:07:40.585 --> 00:07:44.265

we have available, what you find is a kind of leveling,

156

00:07:44.865 --> 00:07:48.785

a leveling from last year, a leveling from some places

157

00:07:48.795 --> 00:07:51.825

where we saw significant decline over the last five years.

158

00:07:52.485 --> 00:07:53.505

And all in all,

159

00:07:53.935 --> 00:07:58.145

what we do not see is any newly precipitous decline.

160

00:07:58.855 --> 00:08:00.265

That feels important to me

161

00:08:00.455 --> 00:08:03.945

because if we were seeing newly precipitous decline,

162

00:08:04.525 --> 00:08:09.185

it means that our strategies need to be, um, accelerated

163

00:08:09.245 --> 00:08:11.305

and sometimes have a different kind of energy.

164

00:08:11.395 --> 00:08:16.105

Right now, I feel like we have the runway in many

165

00:08:16.105 --> 00:08:17.105

of our congregations

166

00:08:17.285 --> 00:08:20.905

and certainly across the faith to take the time it takes

167

00:08:21.245 --> 00:08:22.625

to think strategically.

168

00:08:23.375 --> 00:08:26.825

Instead of rushing into solutions

169

00:08:27.295 --> 00:08:29.905

that feel like the narratives have already been given to us,

170

00:08:30.125 --> 00:08:33.025

we have the time to look at the data to analyze it,

171

00:08:33.285 --> 00:08:35.225

and then to think strategically instead

172

00:08:35.225 --> 00:08:36.665

of first act and anxiety.

173

00:08:37.215 --> 00:08:40.145

I'll also lift up, and you'll see it in the report, that

174

00:08:40.685 --> 00:08:44.265

by no means are we in a universal membership decline.

175

00:08:44.645 --> 00:08:47.505

Uh, in the last year we have 446 congregations

176
00:08:47.505 --> 00:08:49.105
that saw increases in membership.

177
00:08:49.685 --> 00:08:53.105
211 saw two years of consecutive growth,

178
00:08:53.325 --> 00:08:58.045
and we have, um, 81 congregations that impressively grew

179
00:08:58.505 --> 00:08:59.765
for three consecutive years.

180
00:08:59.785 --> 00:09:01.485
And we do need to tap into some

181
00:09:01.485 --> 00:09:03.805
of what's happening in those 81 congregations.

182
00:09:04.385 --> 00:09:09.165
Um, also I wanna point out that for the first time, um,

183
00:09:09.425 --> 00:09:14.245
at least in quite some time, we are showing different kinds

184
00:09:14.245 --> 00:09:15.605
of religious education data,

185
00:09:15.875 --> 00:09:19.085
including not just religious education, um, enrollment,

186
00:09:19.105 --> 00:09:21.605
but religious education participation.

187
00:09:22.185 --> 00:09:25.005
And we are starting to approach, uh,

188
00:09:25.015 --> 00:09:26.925
membership data somewhat differently

189

00:09:27.065 --> 00:09:30.045
as we also look at non-member friends.

190
00:09:30.825 --> 00:09:33.645
So please look at all the different graphs

191
00:09:33.645 --> 00:09:34.925
that you're gonna see in front of you.

192
00:09:35.265 --> 00:09:38.925
And, um, also note that some

193
00:09:38.925 --> 00:09:40.565
of the very best practices

194
00:09:41.065 --> 00:09:44.045
for the religious education programs that are growing

195
00:09:44.185 --> 00:09:45.405
or thriving or changing

196
00:09:45.425 --> 00:09:48.565
or thinking creatively are gonna be, uh, shared

197
00:09:48.565 --> 00:09:51.565
with you all in this upcoming fall issue

198
00:09:51.565 --> 00:09:53.005
of the UU World Magazine.

199
00:09:53.545 --> 00:09:56.685
And we also have a brand new course in, uh,

200
00:09:56.945 --> 00:10:00.365
the UU Institute on tending congregational life

201
00:10:00.715 --> 00:10:04.045
that we can offer, um, some links to as well.

202
00:10:04.425 --> 00:10:06.125
So we have strategies

203
00:10:06.745 --> 00:10:11.525
and connections to offer you about people who are finding

204
00:10:11.595 --> 00:10:13.085
that strategic courage right now.

205
00:10:13.465 --> 00:10:14.885
All that said, I'll be quiet

206
00:10:14.945 --> 00:10:17.845
and I will turn it over to Larry for our next steps

207
00:10:17.865 --> 00:10:19.285
and for telling us what this tool

208
00:10:19.285 --> 00:10:20.445
really is that we're using.

209
00:10:22.045 --> 00:10:23.715
Great, thank you Nancy. For those

210
00:10:23.715 --> 00:10:25.355
who just joined, my name is Larry str.

211
00:10:25.535 --> 00:10:29.475
I'm the director of IT here at the UUA. Um, I'm responsible.

212
00:10:29.615 --> 00:10:32.595
Uh, me and my team are responsible for pulling together, uh,

213
00:10:33.455 --> 00:10:36.155
the certification process, pulling the data together

214
00:10:36.175 --> 00:10:37.355
and generating this report.

215
00:10:37.975 --> 00:10:40.435
Um, so what is certification?

216

00:10:40.505 --> 00:10:42.075

Some of you are probably very familiar

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00:10:42.075 --> 00:10:43.515

with this process in your congregation,

218

00:10:43.895 --> 00:10:47.475

but it is an annual process that every year, during January

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00:10:47.895 --> 00:10:50.755

and early February, our congregations go

220

00:10:50.755 --> 00:10:52.555

through a questionnaire of sorts

221

00:10:52.975 --> 00:10:55.035

and provide the UA with some information.

222

00:10:56.555 --> 00:10:59.595

Certification in itself in our bylaws is designed

223

00:10:59.815 --> 00:11:04.155

to give our congregations delegates, which can enact

224

00:11:04.155 --> 00:11:06.835

and vote on our business process during general assembly.

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00:11:07.255 --> 00:11:10.115

So the act of certifying as a member congregation, the act

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00:11:10.115 --> 00:11:13.595

of certifying, gives you the ability to participate in our,

227

00:11:13.655 --> 00:11:16.035

our, our business discussions during general assembly.

228

00:11:16.655 --> 00:11:19.115

What's missing from certification is all

229

00:11:19.115 --> 00:11:21.115

of our other communities that we at the UA serve

230
00:11:21.115 --> 00:11:24.475
that are not member we have emerging congregation is we have

231
00:11:24.675 --> 00:11:27.315
COVENANTING communities, we have international communities.

232
00:11:27.655 --> 00:11:29.835
And so when we start looking at the certification report,

233
00:11:29.835 --> 00:11:32.515
you're gonna start seeing a blending of the fact

234
00:11:32.515 --> 00:11:35.915
that the uua actually serves a larger community than the

235
00:11:36.075 --> 00:11:37.795
certification report really just covers.

236
00:11:39.055 --> 00:11:42.845
Um, the other thing to note is the data.

237
00:11:42.875 --> 00:11:45.365
It's a, it's a, it's a snapshot in time.

238
00:11:45.945 --> 00:11:48.805
The data is collected in January and February, 2025.

239
00:11:48.805 --> 00:11:53.565
This is the 2025 report, but it is covering data from 2024.

240
00:11:54.465 --> 00:11:56.005
And so while you look at this

241
00:11:56.005 --> 00:11:57.965
and you're seeing 2025 on this report,

242
00:11:58.265 --> 00:11:59.885
it is really about the changes

243

00:11:59.955 --> 00:12:03.085

that happened in our congregations in the past year.

244

00:12:03.515 --> 00:12:07.965

That is January one to essentially December 31st, 2024.

245

00:12:11.335 --> 00:12:13.475

Um, and it is also, um, inaccurate.

246

00:12:13.975 --> 00:12:16.875

Uh, we're asking our congregations

247

00:12:16.895 --> 00:12:18.235

to complete these questions

248

00:12:18.495 --> 00:12:21.275

and sometimes our administrators in the congregations are

249

00:12:21.275 --> 00:12:23.355

ill-equipped to answer some of the financial, some

250

00:12:23.355 --> 00:12:25.675

of the membership questions, and they do the best they can.

251

00:12:25.855 --> 00:12:27.235

And that is great. Um,

252

00:12:27.235 --> 00:12:29.035

however, that does mean there is a little bit

253

00:12:29.035 --> 00:12:30.435

of shifting year to year,

254

00:12:31.055 --> 00:12:33.915

and my team works very hard to try to uncover some of that.

255

00:12:34.055 --> 00:12:37.275

We also have situations where, honestly, our, our computers,

256

00:12:37.275 --> 00:12:39.075

our browsers try to help a little too much

257

00:12:39.135 --> 00:12:40.475

and they auto complete fields.

258

00:12:40.975 --> 00:12:44.235

And so we get situations where, um, maybe a

259

00:12:44.915 --> 00:12:47.715

a an admin left a field blank intentionally, but

260

00:12:47.715 --> 00:12:50.475

before when they went to submit the page, Chrome

261

00:12:50.655 --> 00:12:52.675

or Firefox decided to populate

262

00:12:52.675 --> 00:12:54.755

that field from a completely different thing.

263

00:12:54.975 --> 00:12:56.395

We have things in place to help prevent

264

00:12:56.395 --> 00:12:57.475

that, but it's not perfect.

265

00:12:57.975 --> 00:13:01.195

And so we do a rigorous audit of all the data to look

266

00:13:01.215 --> 00:13:04.795

for major changes in what congregations are reporting.

267

00:13:04.935 --> 00:13:09.075

Did it grow more than 10%? Was this number very far off?

268

00:13:09.145 --> 00:13:10.275

It's not a perfect process.

269

00:13:10.425 --> 00:13:12.195

There's lots of ways things can get missed.

270

00:13:12.615 --> 00:13:15.235

Um, but this happens. So for example, last year, uh,

271

00:13:15.235 --> 00:13:16.755

we reported religious, uh,

272

00:13:16.755 --> 00:13:21.435

enrollment increased considerably about 16% after the fact.

273

00:13:21.435 --> 00:13:23.635

We later discovered a congregation instead

274

00:13:23.635 --> 00:13:25.835

of typing 10 typed in a thousand.

275

00:13:26.295 --> 00:13:29.555

And so we had almost a thousand new enrollments from a

276

00:13:29.555 --> 00:13:31.955

single congregation last year that didn't actually exist.

277

00:13:32.255 --> 00:13:34.115

And that is how it's very easy for the,

278

00:13:34.115 --> 00:13:36.435

even though we have a thousand congregations reporting this,

279

00:13:36.915 --> 00:13:38.075

a small typo like

280

00:13:38.075 --> 00:13:40.275

that can have a large impact on the numbers

281

00:13:40.345 --> 00:13:42.915

that impacted the religious enrollment by, I want

282

00:13:42.915 --> 00:13:44.275

to say 15%.

283

00:13:45.095 --> 00:13:45.315

So

284
00:13:53.695 --> 00:13:55.525
sorry, um, counting congregations.

285
00:13:55.525 --> 00:13:58.045
So what we, when we look at congregations, um,

286
00:13:59.665 --> 00:14:03.375
we're talking about 1081 total congregations communities do

287
00:14:03.375 --> 00:14:04.855
UA served in the past year.

288
00:14:05.655 --> 00:14:07.225
This is a thousand member congregations,

289
00:14:07.565 --> 00:14:09.585
24 emerging congregations.

290
00:14:10.245 --> 00:14:12.065
Um, these are congregations in the process

291
00:14:12.205 --> 00:14:14.905
of becoming a member congregation, uh,

292
00:14:14.905 --> 00:14:16.945
36 Covenanting congregations

293
00:14:17.445 --> 00:14:20.225
and 21 international congregations and communities.

294
00:14:20.845 --> 00:14:22.985
Um, the reason why we're starting

295
00:14:22.985 --> 00:14:24.505
to look at the larger picture

296
00:14:24.505 --> 00:14:26.945
of the community is we have a shifting narrative

297

00:14:26.945 --> 00:14:28.145
happening with congregations.

298
00:14:28.725 --> 00:14:30.825
We have member congregations converting

299
00:14:30.925 --> 00:14:32.465
to covenanting communities.

300
00:14:32.725 --> 00:14:34.785
We have emerging congregations converting

301
00:14:34.785 --> 00:14:35.945
to covenanting communities.

302
00:14:35.965 --> 00:14:37.745
We have covenanting communities converting

303
00:14:37.745 --> 00:14:39.065
to emerging congregations.

304
00:14:39.365 --> 00:14:41.625
And so there is a shift happening all over the place.

305
00:14:41.685 --> 00:14:44.385
And so if we just focus on like member congregations

306
00:14:45.605 --> 00:14:46.905
and if we see that number declining,

307
00:14:46.935 --> 00:14:48.185
it's not telling the whole story

308
00:14:48.185 --> 00:14:50.585
because some of those congregations are still very active.

309
00:14:50.585 --> 00:14:52.765
They have not closed their doors, they're still open,

310
00:14:52.795 --> 00:14:56.365
they're just a different label in our database.

311
00:14:56.745 --> 00:14:59.845
And so when we look at this report, we're actually trying

312
00:14:59.845 --> 00:15:01.605
to look at the full count of our community

313
00:15:01.675 --> 00:15:02.965
that DUA serves here.

314
00:15:03.305 --> 00:15:05.645
And I also wanna note that this is a snapshot in time again.

315
00:15:05.905 --> 00:15:09.405
And that we have, you know, we close the report, we say,

316
00:15:09.485 --> 00:15:11.485
here's the numbers, lock everything in,

317
00:15:11.585 --> 00:15:13.285
but then we learn the community is closed.

318
00:15:13.665 --> 00:15:15.965
And so there is shifting numbers in these things.

319
00:15:16.025 --> 00:15:18.245
And the reality is like sometimes we learned a congregation

320
00:15:18.245 --> 00:15:22.085
closed last year, even though, you know, things have been.

321
00:15:22.185 --> 00:15:25.485
So just keep in mind as you look at things, um,

322
00:15:25.575 --> 00:15:27.805
these numbers always sometimes might look a

323
00:15:27.805 --> 00:15:28.965
little bit different here and there.

324

00:15:28.995 --> 00:15:29.725

It's because we have

325

00:15:29.725 --> 00:15:31.125

communities that are constantly evolving.

326

00:15:34.915 --> 00:15:36.855

And then a new feature we added this year

327

00:15:36.855 --> 00:15:38.175

to the report we did this last year,

328

00:15:38.175 --> 00:15:40.015

we noted the changes in the community,

329

00:15:40.155 --> 00:15:42.135

but this was kind of the, the point where we were like,

330

00:15:42.135 --> 00:15:44.255

how do we track these changes easily?

331

00:15:44.255 --> 00:15:47.335

Because some of these communities are closing prior years,

332

00:15:47.755 --> 00:15:48.935

or we know of a change that's

333

00:15:48.935 --> 00:15:50.055

coming up in the next six months.

334

00:15:50.635 --> 00:15:52.575

It doesn't always reflect on the report cleanly.

335

00:15:52.715 --> 00:15:54.655

And so we started a community change log.

336

00:15:54.715 --> 00:15:56.735

In the report, you'll find a link to a new page

337

00:15:57.085 --> 00:15:59.535

that documents that, the changes that we know

338
00:15:59.535 --> 00:16:00.935
of in the communities every year.

339
00:16:00.995 --> 00:16:03.535
So the congregations that have dissolved, the congregations

340
00:16:03.535 --> 00:16:05.895
that have changed their name, uh,

341
00:16:05.895 --> 00:16:08.655
that have moved from Covenanting to emerge and all that.

342
00:16:08.675 --> 00:16:11.735
And so you'll see that information, um, in,

343
00:16:11.835 --> 00:16:13.215
in within the report, a link

344
00:16:13.235 --> 00:16:14.775
to those details if you want them.

345
00:16:18.445 --> 00:16:19.945
And I will hand this over to Megan

346
00:16:20.005 --> 00:16:22.505
to start talking about our congregation staffing.

347
00:16:23.945 --> 00:16:27.365
And before we, I just wanted to note that in the chat,

348
00:16:27.705 --> 00:16:29.645
we will try to resource your questions as we go.

349
00:16:29.655 --> 00:16:32.405
We're gonna hold most of the questions till the end.

350
00:16:32.905 --> 00:16:34.805
Um, and if we forget yours,

351

00:16:34.805 --> 00:16:36.405
just pop it back in the chat and we'll get to it.

352
00:16:36.435 --> 00:16:37.645
Okay. Megan, all yours?

353
00:16:38.665 --> 00:16:41.245
Yes. I'm famous for trying to put, uh,

354
00:16:41.245 --> 00:16:42.405
look up a resource while people

355
00:16:42.405 --> 00:16:43.445
are talking and stick it in there.

356
00:16:43.445 --> 00:16:45.245
So hopefully that's helpful, but if not, we can,

357
00:16:45.385 --> 00:16:46.645
um, talk more later.

358
00:16:47.105 --> 00:16:49.885
Uh, for those who've just arrived, I'm Reverend Megan Foley,

359
00:16:49.905 --> 00:16:52.125
I'm the deputy director for Congregational Life.

360
00:16:52.145 --> 00:16:54.085
You've maybe also seen me as regional lead

361
00:16:54.085 --> 00:16:56.125
for the Central East region, which is a role

362
00:16:56.125 --> 00:16:57.725
that I stepped down from in July.

363
00:16:58.505 --> 00:17:01.725
Um, so I'm gonna be talking about some

364
00:17:01.725 --> 00:17:05.005
of our congregational based information, um,

365

00:17:05.865 --> 00:17:09.245

and kind of lead you through some of these slides.

366

00:17:10.625 --> 00:17:12.645

So here's kind of an overall chart

367

00:17:12.745 --> 00:17:15.685

of our congregational staffing numbers with all the caveats

368

00:17:15.685 --> 00:17:18.605

that Larry, um, already recommended a snapshot in time.

369

00:17:19.185 --> 00:17:21.645

Um, so these are the total number of known staff

370

00:17:21.705 --> 00:17:22.925

and religious professionals.

371

00:17:23.825 --> 00:17:26.445

Not all positions are fully represented in this report.

372

00:17:26.765 --> 00:17:29.605

I believe there's, um, our report, it gives you boxes

373

00:17:29.785 --> 00:17:31.485

to check, but there are more

374

00:17:31.485 --> 00:17:35.325

and more creative positions these days that are, uh, outside

375

00:17:35.325 --> 00:17:37.045

of what we have measured in the past

376

00:17:37.385 --> 00:17:40.605

and yet not so much consistency that we can like nab 'em

377

00:17:40.625 --> 00:17:42.205

as a, like, as a label.

378

00:17:42.785 --> 00:17:46.005

Um, so that's just something to that's good to know about.

379

00:17:46.705 --> 00:17:48.685

Um, I won't spend a lot of time on the numbers,

380

00:17:49.185 --> 00:17:51.685

but I do wanna just mention that we do have reason

381

00:17:51.745 --> 00:17:52.845

to think in particular

382

00:17:53.275 --> 00:17:56.165

that these data don't reflect the experience on the ground

383

00:17:56.195 --> 00:17:57.325

that we're perceiving and

384

00:17:57.325 --> 00:17:58.685

that our professional religious

385

00:17:59.005 --> 00:18:00.125

educators are telling us about.

386

00:18:00.825 --> 00:18:03.525

Um, the, the news from the ground is

387

00:18:03.525 --> 00:18:06.005

that those jobs are being downgraded,

388

00:18:06.005 --> 00:18:09.165

people are being fired, um, that the,

389

00:18:09.305 --> 00:18:12.405

the profession is experiencing a good deal of churn

390

00:18:12.465 --> 00:18:14.285

and these numbers don't really reflect that.

391

00:18:14.545 --> 00:18:16.525

So I just wanted to let you know that we are working

392
00:18:16.525 --> 00:18:18.525
with the Loreta leadership

393
00:18:18.545 --> 00:18:20.605
and that is our liberal religious educators

394
00:18:20.605 --> 00:18:24.045
of America Loreta, um, to track this better.

395
00:18:24.345 --> 00:18:25.445
And also just be sure

396
00:18:25.445 --> 00:18:27.605
that these extremely valuable professionals

397
00:18:28.145 --> 00:18:30.525
are being honored and compensated appropriately

398
00:18:30.625 --> 00:18:33.205
for the critical work that they do to ensure the vitality

399
00:18:33.205 --> 00:18:34.885
of EU faith formation across the

400
00:18:34.885 --> 00:18:35.965
generations into the future.

401
00:18:40.435 --> 00:18:41.615
Is that it for me right now?

402
00:18:41.675 --> 00:18:43.175
Or can I see the next slide

403
00:18:43.195 --> 00:18:47.185
and see where, um, yes, this is just another snapshot,

404
00:18:47.185 --> 00:18:49.425
another way of looking at the same information.

405

00:18:49.565 --> 00:18:51.425

So we have self-reporting of, you know,

406

00:18:51.495 --> 00:18:54.225

your hey congregation, who do you have on staff?

407

00:18:54.325 --> 00:18:56.065

And then we also happen to know,

408

00:18:56.065 --> 00:18:58.785

because we run our benefits programs, um,

409

00:18:59.005 --> 00:19:00.625

who is getting w twos.

410

00:19:00.725 --> 00:19:02.065

So this is another way of comparing

411

00:19:02.065 --> 00:19:03.065

and contrasting those numbers.

412

00:19:03.845 --> 00:19:08.065

And then I think we're onto to Nancy for a little while. I,

413

00:19:09.635 --> 00:19:10.915

I get to talk about money.

414

00:19:11.575 --> 00:19:14.635

Um, so much of what you, um,

415

00:19:15.135 --> 00:19:19.755

see in the executive summary, uh, are reflections

416

00:19:19.775 --> 00:19:22.515

of trends that in fact, again continue

417

00:19:23.265 --> 00:19:26.235

over last year's trends that we reported out then.

418

00:19:26.695 --> 00:19:28.155

So the four metrics

419

00:19:28.295 --> 00:19:30.635

of financial health I wanna talk about are of course

420

00:19:31.145 --> 00:19:34.595

pledges, then endowments, then long-term debt

421

00:19:34.935 --> 00:19:37.115

and rental income and building ownership.

422

00:19:37.175 --> 00:19:40.315

And then at the end I'll talk just a little bit about

423

00:19:40.345 --> 00:19:41.395

operating expenses.

424

00:19:41.655 --> 00:19:43.715

Though the headline there is not a whole lot

425

00:19:43.715 --> 00:19:45.435

of has changed since last year.

426

00:19:45.775 --> 00:19:47.635

So Larry, could you get us? Yep.

427

00:19:48.295 --> 00:19:49.795

So pledges

428

00:19:49.855 --> 00:19:53.955

and average pledge size, this is a, uh,

429

00:19:54.495 --> 00:19:56.675

paired set of trends that

430

00:19:57.295 --> 00:19:59.915

we can see in the data quite consistently.

431

00:20:00.335 --> 00:20:04.915

And that seems to bear noting in many of our congregations.

432

00:20:05.135 --> 00:20:06.875

So the number of individual

433

00:20:07.055 --> 00:20:10.595

and family pledges are down over the last 10 years.

434

00:20:10.735 --> 00:20:15.555

You can see it from 2016 now to 2025,

435

00:20:16.215 --> 00:20:18.715

but the decline appears to have leveled off

436

00:20:19.435 --> 00:20:21.515

somewhat since 2022.

437

00:20:21.975 --> 00:20:23.195

So we've been more

438

00:20:23.395 --> 00:20:26.915

or less stable in that decline since the numbers came in,

439

00:20:27.335 --> 00:20:29.075

in the 2023 figures.

440

00:20:29.095 --> 00:20:30.875

And we are essentially stable.

441

00:20:31.195 --> 00:20:34.635

I mean, like we can brag about those 400 more

442

00:20:34.745 --> 00:20:37.035

that came in last year, but I don't think it would be wise.

443

00:20:37.165 --> 00:20:40.115

We're essentially stable from the 2024 numbers

444

00:20:41.135 --> 00:20:45.675

and average pledges are up 43% during

445

00:20:45.675 --> 00:20:49.965

that si same time period from 2016 to 2025.

446
00:20:50.195 --> 00:20:52.125
They're up 43%.

447
00:20:52.245 --> 00:20:53.525
I wanna say that again because

448
00:20:53.525 --> 00:20:58.165
that is a significant number from \$1,492

449
00:20:58.345 --> 00:21:00.085
is an average pledge in 2015

450
00:21:00.385 --> 00:21:03.605
to 2,134 in 2025.

451
00:21:04.225 --> 00:21:08.885
Now what you'll see us reflecting on in the report is

452
00:21:08.885 --> 00:21:10.845
that individual congregations need

453
00:21:10.845 --> 00:21:13.445
to do a real gut check on the degree

454
00:21:13.445 --> 00:21:16.605
to which they are relying on the increased generosity

455
00:21:17.305 --> 00:21:18.925
of a smaller number of donors.

456
00:21:19.625 --> 00:21:22.685
Um, so it's a great thing for the average pledge to go up.

457
00:21:23.105 --> 00:21:24.525
It is not a great thing,

458
00:21:24.525 --> 00:21:28.725
whereas it is least a less resilient thing if in fact

459

00:21:29.475 --> 00:21:31.445
that is demonstrating three

460
00:21:31.965 --> 00:21:35.005
enormous pledges in your congregational system

461
00:21:35.425 --> 00:21:38.565
and then a much reduced pledge base overall.

462
00:21:39.225 --> 00:21:43.165
So there's solid news in that we, again,

463
00:21:43.425 --> 00:21:44.725
are in a leveling year.

464
00:21:45.055 --> 00:21:46.365
There is a word of caution

465
00:21:46.705 --> 00:21:51.685
and a a thing to pay attention to is that if you

466
00:21:51.705 --> 00:21:55.805
and your congregation go and look at your specific numbers

467
00:21:56.025 --> 00:21:58.365
and your exact layout of pledges,

468
00:21:58.665 --> 00:22:01.885
you will get a better sense for yourself individually

469
00:22:01.905 --> 00:22:04.205
as a congregation about that.

470
00:22:04.425 --> 00:22:07.565
Um, the, the challenges to that fiscal resilience

471
00:22:07.785 --> 00:22:11.085
and how much you're relying on a few large pledges then we

472
00:22:11.085 --> 00:22:12.845
can give you in this overall data.

473
00:22:13.335 --> 00:22:14.965
Larry, you can take us to the next one.

474
00:22:15.545 --> 00:22:20.165
Um, so again, this is continuing the trend

475
00:22:20.205 --> 00:22:22.325
that we reported out on last year

476
00:22:22.945 --> 00:22:25.885
and it is a very significant trend.

477
00:22:26.665 --> 00:22:30.805
So our endowments in UU congregations

478
00:22:30.825 --> 00:22:34.805
and communities continue to grow and not only endowments

479
00:22:34.805 --> 00:22:35.925
but reserve funds.

480
00:22:36.585 --> 00:22:40.365
So, um, again, we're just showing our numbers from 2016,

481
00:22:40.365 --> 00:22:41.965
though we can track it further back.

482
00:22:42.705 --> 00:22:46.245
UU congregational endowments and reserves continue to grow

483
00:22:46.345 --> 00:22:49.245
and now total \$1.25 billion.

484
00:22:49.425 --> 00:22:51.725
The important number I wanna say is that

485
00:22:51.725 --> 00:22:55.165
that's up 58% from 2016.

486

00:22:55.905 --> 00:22:58.285

So our folks are managing these funds, right?

487

00:22:58.285 --> 00:23:00.005

And these funds are being responsive

488

00:23:00.005 --> 00:23:01.485

to larger fiscal trends.

489

00:23:02.145 --> 00:23:06.245

Um, they're honestly being responsive to things far

490

00:23:06.245 --> 00:23:07.405

beyond our control.

491

00:23:08.035 --> 00:23:11.605

What we do wanna lift up is that we should not be

492

00:23:12.125 --> 00:23:14.325

considering our budgeting

493

00:23:14.905 --> 00:23:18.285

and our strategic decision making

494

00:23:19.175 --> 00:23:22.845

based solely on what we see in terms of pledge numbers

495

00:23:22.995 --> 00:23:26.685

with no consideration at all to the various other holdings

496

00:23:26.995 --> 00:23:29.245

that congregations have access to.

497

00:23:29.905 --> 00:23:34.085

Um, this is not, um, you know, some person working

498

00:23:34.145 --> 00:23:35.405

for the UUA telling you

499

00:23:35.405 --> 00:23:37.845

to go spend down your endowment right now.

500
00:23:38.395 --> 00:23:39.805
It's only an invitation

501
00:23:40.345 --> 00:23:42.725
to take a holistic look at the health

502
00:23:43.145 --> 00:23:44.925
of your extra budgetary holdings

503
00:23:45.745 --> 00:23:47.445
and at your congregation's

504
00:23:47.445 --> 00:23:48.925
projections for how that would work.

505
00:23:49.395 --> 00:23:51.485
I'll also take just a moment to say

506
00:23:51.485 --> 00:23:53.845
that the EU Common Endowment Fund, um,

507
00:23:54.105 --> 00:23:56.565
has just launched a brand new website.

508
00:23:57.065 --> 00:23:59.845
Um, and I think we have a lot of reason

509
00:24:00.145 --> 00:24:03.965
to be optimistic about the long-term sustainability

510
00:24:03.985 --> 00:24:05.965
of the U Common Endowment Fund

511
00:24:06.065 --> 00:24:08.845
and your congregational funds invested in it.

512
00:24:09.385 --> 00:24:12.125
Um, and they have also done some incredible

513

00:24:12.305 --> 00:24:14.405
and important work aligning

514
00:24:14.715 --> 00:24:18.405
with the president's climate Justice task force so

515
00:24:18.405 --> 00:24:20.965
that those holdings can be demonstrating our values

516
00:24:21.065 --> 00:24:23.805
but also have, um, performance

517
00:24:24.195 --> 00:24:25.965
that we can feel confident in.

518
00:24:26.425 --> 00:24:29.485
And honestly, if you look at our endowments, you see, uh,

519
00:24:29.685 --> 00:24:32.765
a level of performance that that is going pretty well.

520
00:24:32.795 --> 00:24:37.445
Alright, next. Alright, long term debt.

521
00:24:37.945 --> 00:24:40.125
And again, this is a snapshot.

522
00:24:40.475 --> 00:24:42.605
This is not necessarily the story

523
00:24:42.605 --> 00:24:44.285
that you're telling in your congregation,

524
00:24:44.345 --> 00:24:47.445
but we have a snapshot of Rising Endowment holdings

525
00:24:47.985 --> 00:24:52.565
and, um, we have a very clear trend

526
00:24:52.985 --> 00:24:56.405
of decreasing long-term debt within our

527
00:24:56.405 --> 00:24:57.805
congregations and communities.

528
00:24:57.945 --> 00:25:01.445
So long-term debt continues to shrink, uh,

529
00:25:01.515 --> 00:25:04.245
from 113 million in 2016

530
00:25:04.705 --> 00:25:09.485
to 68 point 66.8 million in 2025.

531
00:25:10.145 --> 00:25:12.405
Now we're paying off our mortgages.

532
00:25:12.775 --> 00:25:14.845
Maybe we're not building in the ways

533
00:25:14.845 --> 00:25:18.205
that we might have been in 2016, um,

534
00:25:18.425 --> 00:25:22.165
and perhaps some of this reduction in long-term debt.

535
00:25:22.705 --> 00:25:24.565
And we don't, we don't have these numbers,

536
00:25:24.665 --> 00:25:25.725
so this is speculation,

537
00:25:25.725 --> 00:25:30.525
but perhaps some of it is changing, um, the,

538
00:25:31.745 --> 00:25:32.885
the number of buildings

539
00:25:32.885 --> 00:25:36.965
that in fact we own within Unitarian Universalism.

540

00:25:37.425 --> 00:25:39.085
Can you do the next slide, Larry?

541
00:25:40.065 --> 00:25:43.765
So that brings us to rental income and building ownership.

542
00:25:44.385 --> 00:25:46.725
So you'll notice we hedged it a little bit.

543
00:25:46.745 --> 00:25:49.205
We said building ownership may be on the decline.

544
00:25:49.545 --> 00:25:51.125
We actually cannot tell you

545
00:25:51.125 --> 00:25:53.405
that definitively from the numbers in front of us,

546
00:25:53.425 --> 00:25:57.085
but it, um, seems quite possible that

547
00:25:57.085 --> 00:25:59.205
what we have is maybe the beginning of a trend

548
00:25:59.505 --> 00:26:04.205
of congregations starting to sell or repurpose buildings

549
00:26:04.505 --> 00:26:06.165
or to gather in different ways.

550
00:26:06.985 --> 00:26:10.365
Um, the other important trend here is that rental

551
00:26:10.465 --> 00:26:13.085
and building use income is rising,

552
00:26:13.305 --> 00:26:16.725
but slowing now all through the time, just

553
00:26:16.725 --> 00:26:19.805
after the pandemic and up through last year,

554
00:26:20.145 --> 00:26:23.765
we saw some really just steady U up upticks in

555
00:26:23.765 --> 00:26:24.765
that rental income

556
00:26:25.265 --> 00:26:28.685
as honestly people were building their rental pro programs

557
00:26:29.025 --> 00:26:30.645
to support their operating budget

558
00:26:30.705 --> 00:26:33.645
and to repurpose those sacred spaces in

559
00:26:33.645 --> 00:26:34.765
different missional ways.

560
00:26:35.345 --> 00:26:37.885
We see that starting to slow a little bit,

561
00:26:38.055 --> 00:26:40.125
which tells me it's possible that many

562
00:26:40.125 --> 00:26:43.525
of those buildings are now fully leveraged in terms

563
00:26:43.525 --> 00:26:46.685
of the rental income that, that they can squeeze out.

564
00:26:46.685 --> 00:26:49.325
There is not unlimited, you know,

565
00:26:49.745 --> 00:26:52.925
coffee hour fellowship halls for unlimited weddings.

566
00:26:53.015 --> 00:26:55.885
There are only so many Saturdays you can book that space

567

00:26:56.105 --> 00:26:58.605
and there are only so many different rooms

568
00:26:58.605 --> 00:27:03.365
that you can rent out for other missional purposes as well.

569
00:27:04.065 --> 00:27:08.325
Um, so if you leave it there for just a second, Larry,

570
00:27:08.565 --> 00:27:12.685
I will also add that in terms of operating expenses,

571
00:27:12.785 --> 00:27:14.165
and we don't have a slide for it,

572
00:27:14.165 --> 00:27:15.645
but you can see it all in the report.

573
00:27:16.025 --> 00:27:18.005
Um, operating expenses

574
00:27:18.675 --> 00:27:22.965
have increased 3.18% over the last year.

575
00:27:23.465 --> 00:27:24.925
Um, the US Bureau

576
00:27:24.925 --> 00:27:28.605
of Labor Statistics reported average inflation increase

577
00:27:28.705 --> 00:27:30.325
of 2.9%.

578
00:27:30.745 --> 00:27:33.445
So you see our operating expenses ticking up a little faster

579
00:27:33.915 --> 00:27:35.525
than the rate of inflation.

580
00:27:36.435 --> 00:27:39.245
Just a particular just, I don't know,

581
00:27:39.375 --> 00:27:42.525
Nancy note in this space, um, is

582
00:27:42.525 --> 00:27:45.005
that we should have some awareness

583
00:27:45.145 --> 00:27:47.045
of broader trends in healthcare.

584
00:27:48.695 --> 00:27:52.195
The environment around us is not something to be discounted.

585
00:27:52.445 --> 00:27:54.235
Healthcare costs are going up,

586
00:27:54.505 --> 00:27:56.515
sometimes they're going up dramatically.

587
00:27:57.175 --> 00:28:00.595
And our office office of church staff finances is working

588
00:28:01.265 --> 00:28:05.235
very hard to hold onto our plan to ensure

589
00:28:05.235 --> 00:28:08.395
that the increases we will see and we will see increases.

590
00:28:08.855 --> 00:28:12.235
Um, and the healthcare costs that, that are aligned

591
00:28:12.235 --> 00:28:15.195
with our plan are as managed as possible

592
00:28:15.615 --> 00:28:18.075
and that the choices we're making in it are

593
00:28:18.075 --> 00:28:19.955
as values aligned as possible.

594

00:28:20.345 --> 00:28:21.795

This is no small feat.

595

00:28:22.215 --> 00:28:26.275

Um, and we should anticipate that at least

596

00:28:26.735 --> 00:28:27.955

for the next several years.

597

00:28:27.955 --> 00:28:30.995

Healthcare costs in this country at large, no matter what,

598

00:28:31.575 --> 00:28:36.415

um, no matter what plan your congregation is on,

599

00:28:36.835 --> 00:28:37.935

um, and whether or not

600

00:28:37.935 --> 00:28:40.455

that plan is values aligned in the way

601

00:28:40.455 --> 00:28:43.215

that we hope the UUA plan seeks to be,

602

00:28:43.525 --> 00:28:44.815

will continue to go up.

603

00:28:45.115 --> 00:28:50.015

The same can likely be said for, um, ensuring our buildings.

604

00:28:50.475 --> 00:28:52.535

It is a very volatile

605

00:28:53.235 --> 00:28:56.735

and sometimes incredibly frustrating space right now.

606

00:28:57.115 --> 00:29:00.535

Congregational, um, building insurance.

607

00:29:01.405 --> 00:29:04.695

Alright, that is all I have for the money for the moment

608
00:29:05.115 --> 00:29:06.495
and I'll pitch it back to Megan.

609
00:29:07.745 --> 00:29:08.925
I'm back as promised.

610
00:29:09.225 --> 00:29:11.885
So I'm gonna run through this section of the report

611
00:29:11.885 --> 00:29:15.565
that covers membership, uh, membership by congregation size.

612
00:29:15.585 --> 00:29:17.325
So I'm gonna have some exciting news about our

613
00:29:17.325 --> 00:29:18.805
congregational size breakdowns.

614
00:29:18.805 --> 00:29:21.405
Now we're gonna be talking about our re-enrollment a little

615
00:29:21.405 --> 00:29:24.125
bit and, um, a new feature that we're tracking now

616
00:29:24.125 --> 00:29:25.965
for religious education that's for folks

617
00:29:25.965 --> 00:29:27.685
that are not enrolled, but participants.

618
00:29:28.385 --> 00:29:32.365
Um, so I stole this slide from Larry

619
00:29:32.365 --> 00:29:34.245
because I think it's so exciting

620
00:29:34.305 --> 00:29:35.525
and I wanted to talk about it here.

621

00:29:35.665 --> 00:29:39.045

But, um, Larry and his team have done responded

622

00:29:39.065 --> 00:29:40.085

to I think our number,

623

00:29:40.325 --> 00:29:42.765

I think it was our number one request about the data was can

624

00:29:42.765 --> 00:29:43.765

you break it down by size?

625

00:29:44.305 --> 00:29:47.005

Um, and so Larry and team have done that

626

00:29:47.105 --> 00:29:49.845

and they, um, have chosen these categories

627

00:29:49.845 --> 00:29:51.685

because they're roughly equivalent to each other.

628

00:29:52.505 --> 00:29:55.205

And I don't know, even someone who's been on Uua staff

629

00:29:55.205 --> 00:29:57.965

for 10 years working very closely with congregations,

630

00:29:58.355 --> 00:29:59.765

even small congregations,

631

00:30:00.285 --> 00:30:02.245

I am still surprised every time I see this.

632

00:30:02.665 --> 00:30:05.005

As you can see fully one half

633

00:30:05.005 --> 00:30:06.885

of our congregations are under a hundred members.

634

00:30:08.375 --> 00:30:11.795

So I think that's really kind of exciting to know.

635
00:30:12.175 --> 00:30:16.585
And, um, it it,

636
00:30:16.805 --> 00:30:19.865
it means that our small and potentially deeply connected

637
00:30:19.865 --> 00:30:22.305
and relationally accountable communities are the bread

638
00:30:22.305 --> 00:30:23.425
and butter of our movement.

639
00:30:23.805 --> 00:30:26.505
So there, I hope if you are coming here from a small

640
00:30:26.505 --> 00:30:31.025
congregation and you've ever thought, um, we're the outlier,

641
00:30:31.285 --> 00:30:32.305
we don't belong.

642
00:30:32.565 --> 00:30:34.825
We are always trying to catch up. We're not a real church.

643
00:30:34.935 --> 00:30:38.185
That this data helps you understand that you are in fact

644
00:30:38.965 --> 00:30:40.425
the real church of the UUA.

645
00:30:40.565 --> 00:30:42.825
And so all the potential within that is yours

646
00:30:42.845 --> 00:30:43.985
to grab a hold of.

647
00:30:45.305 --> 00:30:48.485
Um, also, while most of our congregations are small, most

648

00:30:48.485 --> 00:30:51.125
of our members are in larger congregations.

649
00:30:51.125 --> 00:30:54.205
So 150 plus with, um, changing

650
00:30:54.385 --> 00:30:56.165
and important ME metrics are coming up

651
00:30:56.165 --> 00:30:57.725
for large congregations too.

652
00:30:58.625 --> 00:31:01.845
So large congregations total a little bit more than 3%

653
00:31:01.845 --> 00:31:03.125
of our member congregations,

654
00:31:03.665 --> 00:31:06.485
but they hold 18.5% of our membership.

655
00:31:06.545 --> 00:31:09.045
So there's 3% of our congregations are large,

656
00:31:09.505 --> 00:31:11.445
but 18% of our UUs are in them.

657
00:31:12.795 --> 00:31:16.975
Um, and I think another point to pull out is that nearly 20%

658
00:31:16.975 --> 00:31:20.575
of our participants in UU religious education nationwide

659
00:31:21.005 --> 00:31:23.935
were involved in re in a large EU congregation,

660
00:31:23.935 --> 00:31:26.815
which just again points to the importance of having

661
00:31:27.125 --> 00:31:29.215
that kind of professional staffing at hand.

662
00:31:30.115 --> 00:31:32.335
So we are hoping to continue exploring what

663
00:31:32.335 --> 00:31:34.975
that data tells us in all of these size categories

664
00:31:34.995 --> 00:31:38.215
and figuring out how each of those categories differ,

665
00:31:38.395 --> 00:31:40.375
how they are similar and what their needs and,

666
00:31:40.475 --> 00:31:42.335
and, um, hopes are in there.

667
00:31:44.425 --> 00:31:47.525
So congregational membership technically grew a little bit

668
00:31:47.595 --> 00:31:50.645
last year, but it is about in the same range as it has been

669
00:31:50.745 --> 00:31:52.245
for a few years now.

670
00:31:52.605 --> 00:31:56.285
I don't love how this line goes down so fast,

671
00:31:56.345 --> 00:31:58.045
but that is pandemic time

672
00:31:58.185 --> 00:32:00.765
and you can see it bounce up a little bit towards the end.

673
00:32:01.505 --> 00:32:04.325
Um, as Nancy already mentioned, this isn't the whole story.

674
00:32:04.505 --> 00:32:07.525
We have 446 congregations that grew last year.

675

00:32:08.265 --> 00:32:11.565

Um, there's 211 congregations that grew two years in a row,

676

00:32:11.625 --> 00:32:14.005

and there's 81 that grew three years in a row.

677

00:32:15.335 --> 00:32:18.755

Um, I'll also point out that, uh, I do a lot of study of

678

00:32:18.775 --> 00:32:21.155

of interfaith pandemic responses

679

00:32:21.215 --> 00:32:23.555

and this decline in con in, um,

680

00:32:23.805 --> 00:32:26.675

membership is pretty common across the spectrum of,

681

00:32:26.675 --> 00:32:28.195

of face in the United States.

682

00:32:30.865 --> 00:32:34.395

This is another chart with the, with the number numbers

683

00:32:34.775 --> 00:32:36.875

of membership by congregational size.

684

00:32:37.015 --> 00:32:38.155

So I encourage you to go back

685

00:32:38.175 --> 00:32:39.645

and take a deep dive into

686

00:32:39.645 --> 00:32:41.285

that if you are interested in doing that.

687

00:32:43.465 --> 00:32:44.595

Next slide please.

688

00:32:47.425 --> 00:32:50.125

So, religious education non enrolled.

689
00:32:50.345 --> 00:32:52.405
So this is the new thing that we're tracking

690
00:32:52.865 --> 00:32:54.565
and I'll tell you in a minute of why.

691
00:32:54.625 --> 00:32:59.165
So re enrollment in sort of our more traditional programs

692
00:32:59.925 --> 00:33:01.845
continues to decline as it has each year.

693
00:33:02.025 --> 00:33:05.685
In recent years and this year, the reduction was about 2%.

694
00:33:06.305 --> 00:33:08.805
And in the chart you can see a regional breakdown

695
00:33:08.805 --> 00:33:09.805
of re enrollment.

696
00:33:09.865 --> 00:33:11.145
Now, um,

697
00:33:11.685 --> 00:33:14.865
we are also now tracking non-registered participants,

698
00:33:15.005 --> 00:33:17.825
so not enrolled as well as the enrolled ones.

699
00:33:18.645 --> 00:33:21.585
And so as it says here, non enrolled events

700
00:33:22.215 --> 00:33:25.065
include things like camps, special events,

701
00:33:25.115 --> 00:33:28.385
maybe a one-time event volunteering at the church if you

702

00:33:28.385 --> 00:33:32.145

need service learning hours for school, dropping in space,

703

00:33:32.255 --> 00:33:33.665

like you do a community outreach

704

00:33:33.665 --> 00:33:35.625

and an invite people to drop off kids

705

00:33:36.625 --> 00:33:39.545

owl classes sometimes if they're not included in the way the

706

00:33:39.545 --> 00:33:40.625

congregation counts it.

707

00:33:40.915 --> 00:33:43.065

Other kind of more innovative programming

708

00:33:43.085 --> 00:33:46.465

or new kinds of programming that are more one-off events

709

00:33:46.525 --> 00:33:48.685

or shorter term tracking.

710

00:33:48.685 --> 00:33:50.085

This is important because many

711

00:33:50.085 --> 00:33:52.925

of our successful re programs are taking these

712

00:33:52.925 --> 00:33:54.765

non-traditional routes to draw kids

713

00:33:54.825 --> 00:33:57.085

and families in whether the family

714

00:33:57.145 --> 00:34:00.045

and kids only wanna participate in these shorter term things

715

00:34:00.305 --> 00:34:03.245

or if it's kind of an onboarding ramp to, um,

716
00:34:03.485 --> 00:34:05.685
a more like robust participation later,

717
00:34:06.265 --> 00:34:07.445
it wouldn't serve us.

718
00:34:07.625 --> 00:34:09.925
It doesn't reflect, um, the innovations

719
00:34:09.925 --> 00:34:11.085
that are happening in the education

720
00:34:11.085 --> 00:34:12.285
field if we don't count them.

721
00:34:12.285 --> 00:34:13.365
So that's why we're doing that.

722
00:34:14.895 --> 00:34:18.895
I also wanna point out that 247 congregations saw increases

723
00:34:18.895 --> 00:34:20.415
to re enrollment in the,

724
00:34:20.435 --> 00:34:22.055
in the data that you're seeing tonight.

725
00:34:22.475 --> 00:34:23.815
And that matches what we're seeing

726
00:34:23.815 --> 00:34:24.975
in the field we're seeing.

727
00:34:25.115 --> 00:34:26.495
Um, it's either it's hot

728
00:34:26.495 --> 00:34:28.455
and cold, you might have a re program

729

00:34:28.455 --> 00:34:31.415
that is off the charts growing with lots

730
00:34:31.415 --> 00:34:32.935
of people coming in, and then we have others

731
00:34:32.935 --> 00:34:35.015
that are just not at all functioning

732
00:34:35.015 --> 00:34:36.095
in the way they did in the past.

733
00:34:38.435 --> 00:34:40.415
The next slide is re enrollment.

734
00:34:42.365 --> 00:34:44.285
I don't want to read numbers

735
00:34:44.505 --> 00:34:46.565
or wait a long time for you to read numbers, I guess.

736
00:34:46.565 --> 00:34:48.365
So I encourage you to go back to the, um,

737
00:34:48.585 --> 00:34:50.165
to the report itself

738
00:34:51.065 --> 00:34:53.205
and, uh, check out the numbers if you're

739
00:34:53.205 --> 00:34:54.325
interested in those.

740
00:34:57.675 --> 00:35:00.455
We track diversity and demographics over time, the best

741
00:35:00.455 --> 00:35:03.815
that we can now it's, you know, it's a little bit

742
00:35:03.815 --> 00:35:06.535
of a guessing game to put in these numbers.

743
00:35:06.995 --> 00:35:08.295
Um, so it's a little tricky,

744
00:35:08.395 --> 00:35:10.215
but they do provide a little bit of information

745
00:35:10.215 --> 00:35:11.255
that we can track over time.

746
00:35:12.075 --> 00:35:14.895
So what you see here are the things that we are tracking,

747
00:35:15.025 --> 00:35:16.295
which might be of interest to you.

748
00:35:16.955 --> 00:35:19.455
And it seems like we may have an increase,

749
00:35:19.745 --> 00:35:23.815
small increase in overall of our, um, folks of color, black,

750
00:35:23.815 --> 00:35:25.695
indigenous people of color staff.

751
00:35:25.955 --> 00:35:27.455
The numbers have gone up somewhat.

752
00:35:28.375 --> 00:35:30.355
We also had fewer congregations answer

753
00:35:30.355 --> 00:35:31.635
this question at all last year.

754
00:35:31.815 --> 00:35:35.675
So there may be some shifts as a result of, of those, um,

755
00:35:35.805 --> 00:35:37.285
who's choosing to answer the questions.

756

00:35:41.895 --> 00:35:44.115

All right, this is a part that really touches home

757

00:35:44.255 --> 00:35:45.755

for my work day to day.

758

00:35:45.985 --> 00:35:48.235

This is our congregational questionnaire.

759

00:35:49.215 --> 00:35:53.645

Um, this helps us understand

760

00:35:53.645 --> 00:35:56.405

congregational engagement with UUA staff.

761

00:35:57.185 --> 00:35:59.845

Our events, our programming that we offer

762

00:36:00.065 --> 00:36:01.245

and that we encourage.

763

00:36:01.625 --> 00:36:02.765

You may create it, but we,

764

00:36:02.785 --> 00:36:04.205

we encourage and we like to see it.

765

00:36:04.665 --> 00:36:07.125

So here we find a lot of questions about

766

00:36:07.125 --> 00:36:08.885

what activities you're engaged in,

767

00:36:09.635 --> 00:36:11.485

what relationships you're developing outside

768

00:36:11.485 --> 00:36:14.405

of your congregation, what policies you create,

769

00:36:14.915 --> 00:36:16.925

what UUA materials you've engaged with,

770

00:36:17.265 --> 00:36:19.045

how much conflict you have going on,

771

00:36:19.545 --> 00:36:22.085

how much you might be contacting Uua staff,

772

00:36:22.085 --> 00:36:23.405

especially regional staff.

773

00:36:24.305 --> 00:36:26.285

Um, and so this information that you're about

774

00:36:26.285 --> 00:36:27.445

to see can help you see

775

00:36:27.445 --> 00:36:30.285

what other congregations are engaged in or they learn

776

00:36:30.465 --> 00:36:31.725

or you can learn about programs

777

00:36:31.725 --> 00:36:33.685

that maybe you didn't know about but other people are using.

778

00:36:35.345 --> 00:36:37.165

So just to summarize,

779

00:36:37.825 --> 00:36:40.685

and I think I'm still on this slide for now, Larry, um,

780

00:36:42.125 --> 00:36:43.815

they're much like our other data.

781

00:36:44.005 --> 00:36:46.135

It's sort of like a level, but we will.

782

00:36:46.235 --> 00:36:48.655

Um, but we have noted when I looked at this data

783

00:36:48.765 --> 00:36:51.215
that this year shows an uptick in the number

784
00:36:51.215 --> 00:36:53.775
of active social justice teams in our congregation

785
00:36:54.315 --> 00:36:56.015
and in participation in social justice

786
00:36:56.145 --> 00:36:57.495
activities across the board.

787
00:36:57.495 --> 00:36:59.615
That is no surprise given the election

788
00:36:59.675 --> 00:37:00.895
and the aftermath of that

789
00:37:02.615 --> 00:37:04.375
reported congregational conflict appears

790
00:37:04.375 --> 00:37:08.815
to be down since 2024 or really 2023 when, which, you know,

791
00:37:09.135 --> 00:37:10.535
'cause of the delay in measuring.

792
00:37:11.545 --> 00:37:13.775
We're also seeing a slight decline in congregations

793
00:37:13.835 --> 00:37:16.175
who report that their ministries are being driven forward

794
00:37:16.195 --> 00:37:18.175
by a shared understanding of their mission.

795
00:37:18.395 --> 00:37:20.815
So we're a little bit less mission driven than

796
00:37:20.815 --> 00:37:21.855
the last time we asked.

797

00:37:22.305 --> 00:37:24.095

These aren't huge changes at all,

798

00:37:24.275 --> 00:37:27.615

but taken together, it gives me an opportunity to say

799

00:37:28.085 --> 00:37:31.835

that our staff's understanding from the ground is that, um,

800

00:37:31.835 --> 00:37:34.675

congregations are attending to world events at this time

801

00:37:34.855 --> 00:37:37.795

and are a little deer in the headlights about it,

802

00:37:37.795 --> 00:37:40.155

rather than we found in most times

803

00:37:40.155 --> 00:37:42.035

that we've had a major world event.

804

00:37:42.095 --> 00:37:43.995

So whether that's the first Trump presidency

805

00:37:44.255 --> 00:37:47.275

or pandemic, now the second Trump presidency

806

00:37:47.535 --> 00:37:49.795

and the pandemic of course had multiple stages in it.

807

00:37:50.245 --> 00:37:53.675

Every time we in the field saw congregations take a moment

808

00:37:54.535 --> 00:37:58.115

to, um, be stunned to figure out what they're about

809

00:37:58.375 --> 00:38:00.795

and then, and then they go ahead

810

00:38:00.795 --> 00:38:03.275
and make, um, structural the more structural

811
00:38:03.275 --> 00:38:04.355
changes to address it.

812
00:38:04.935 --> 00:38:07.755
Um, so fighting tends to go down, uh,

813
00:38:07.755 --> 00:38:10.685
because there's a, something outside to pay attention to.

814
00:38:11.305 --> 00:38:14.125
Um, but the way in which you might catch up like two

815
00:38:14.125 --> 00:38:15.925
or three years later with a new mission,

816
00:38:16.285 --> 00:38:17.965
suddenly your mission doesn't really apply anymore.

817
00:38:17.995 --> 00:38:19.925
What do we do? It takes a couple of years

818
00:38:19.945 --> 00:38:21.805
to get everybody out of this stunned space

819
00:38:22.265 --> 00:38:24.565
to assess what's really going on and to make changes.

820
00:38:25.105 --> 00:38:26.485
And I actually don't even think that's bad.

821
00:38:26.525 --> 00:38:31.235
I just think it's a fact. Um, I'll point out a lovely line

822
00:38:31.235 --> 00:38:32.835
that Nancy put in the executive summary.

823
00:38:33.495 --> 00:38:35.365
Uh, she wrote, one gets the sense

824
00:38:35.365 --> 00:38:37.765
that Unitarian Universalists are reacting to the world

825
00:38:37.765 --> 00:38:39.205
around us with great faithfulness,

826
00:38:39.665 --> 00:38:41.285
but somewhat scattered strategy.

827
00:38:41.465 --> 00:38:43.645
And of course they are. And what else would it be? Like?

828
00:38:43.805 --> 00:38:47.285
I think scattered strategy would be a good definition of all

829
00:38:47.285 --> 00:38:49.125
of our times in the progressive movements these days.

830
00:38:49.585 --> 00:38:50.925
Um, but we're figuring it out.

831
00:38:52.185 --> 00:38:54.045
Uh, and we will continue to do so.

832
00:38:54.125 --> 00:38:57.705
I know that is absolutely true. Next slide.

833
00:38:59.365 --> 00:39:00.985
So this is what I always like to see.

834
00:39:01.205 --> 00:39:03.265
It is a question of has the u uua been helpful?

835
00:39:03.405 --> 00:39:05.665
And that almost always, well we take it

836
00:39:05.665 --> 00:39:07.465
to mean on regional staff that they're talking about us.

837

00:39:07.665 --> 00:39:09.105

'cause we're the ones who take your calls

838

00:39:09.165 --> 00:39:11.545

and show up in your congregations more than other

839

00:39:12.185 --> 00:39:13.465

UUA staff do.

840

00:39:14.325 --> 00:39:18.225

So. And Larry has made this amazing, like shading to show,

841

00:39:18.965 --> 00:39:20.745

um, the changes in the year.

842

00:39:20.885 --> 00:39:25.265

So we're seeing that still most people find the UUA somewhat

843

00:39:25.325 --> 00:39:27.305

or very helpful, which is great,

844

00:39:27.325 --> 00:39:29.105

and people found us a bit more helpful, uh,

845

00:39:29.895 --> 00:39:31.225

last year than they did the year

846

00:39:31.225 --> 00:39:33.025

before, which is a great trend.

847

00:39:33.825 --> 00:39:35.505

I particularly love seeing.

848

00:39:36.205 --> 00:39:37.705

And that might be in the next slide,

849

00:39:37.725 --> 00:39:41.305

but I like to see how that we now have fewer congregations

850

00:39:41.305 --> 00:39:43.745

that report zero interaction with the ua.

851
00:39:43.815 --> 00:39:45.825
That, that is tragic to me.

852
00:39:46.365 --> 00:39:48.785
Um, if you are from a congregation

853
00:39:48.785 --> 00:39:51.025
that has very little interaction with the uua,

854
00:39:51.745 --> 00:39:54.385
I am highly recommending that you please give us a try.

855
00:39:54.645 --> 00:39:56.145
It is always a good time to plug in.

856
00:39:56.145 --> 00:39:58.705
We are, we are always reaching out to your staff

857
00:39:59.165 --> 00:40:01.345
and your board leadership the best that we can.

858
00:40:01.805 --> 00:40:03.585
If you've gotten a mysterious email

859
00:40:03.585 --> 00:40:05.505
and you're not sure what it, what this person's asking for,

860
00:40:05.845 --> 00:40:08.465
please respond and just get it.

861
00:40:08.525 --> 00:40:10.945
You will have a sit down, you can have a conversation about

862
00:40:10.945 --> 00:40:13.345
what your needs are, and that's the best way of finding out

863
00:40:13.345 --> 00:40:15.305
what we have, um, to offer to help.

864

00:40:18.295 --> 00:40:22.075

So our last one here is, um,

865

00:40:24.015 --> 00:40:26.675

we ask also how can the UUA help you?

866

00:40:27.415 --> 00:40:29.555

And you can see here the list of

867

00:40:29.815 --> 00:40:32.355

how our congregations are asking for help.

868

00:40:33.335 --> 00:40:36.035

Um, I always find that the things that congregations say

869

00:40:36.035 --> 00:40:38.795

that they want help with are usually also the areas

870

00:40:38.795 --> 00:40:39.995

where they're the most anxious

871

00:40:40.015 --> 00:40:41.315

and we get the most calls about.

872

00:40:41.415 --> 00:40:43.835

So no, no field staff would be surprised

873

00:40:43.835 --> 00:40:44.875

about this order of things.

874

00:40:45.215 --> 00:40:46.315

Um, something that's a little new

875

00:40:46.335 --> 00:40:50.515

of course this year is sort of, um, safety concerns, active

876

00:40:51.115 --> 00:40:52.915

activist, like looking

877

00:40:52.915 --> 00:40:54.915

for activist learning opportunities, stuff like that.

878
00:40:57.125 --> 00:40:59.705
So what I'm gonna do now is beg Nancy

879
00:41:00.005 --> 00:41:01.945
to start dropping some links in

880
00:41:01.945 --> 00:41:04.785
because this is the part where I talked

881
00:41:04.785 --> 00:41:06.465
to you a little bit about some of the resources

882
00:41:06.465 --> 00:41:07.625
that we do have.

883
00:41:08.185 --> 00:41:10.855
Actually, can you go back to the the last one?

884
00:41:10.855 --> 00:41:15.375
Thanks, sorry. Um, last year when we saw this collection,

885
00:41:15.395 --> 00:41:17.535
we created something called a partnership portal.

886
00:41:17.675 --> 00:41:21.655
And it's a landing page that curates our materials according

887
00:41:21.675 --> 00:41:23.095
to how you might ask the question.

888
00:41:23.595 --> 00:41:25.895
So, and I can't see if the, the links are going in,

889
00:41:25.915 --> 00:41:27.295
so I assume they are.

890
00:41:27.415 --> 00:41:29.535
And we will also send them again, um, tomorrow.

891

00:41:29.635 --> 00:41:31.935

So you can either click on 'em now or wait for the email.

892

00:41:33.065 --> 00:41:35.525

So the partnership portal is the easiest way

893

00:41:35.525 --> 00:41:36.605

to access resources.

894

00:41:36.715 --> 00:41:40.165

It's organized by question, like how do I manage staff?

895

00:41:40.465 --> 00:41:42.645

Et cetera, et cetera. Um, so we encourage you

896

00:41:42.645 --> 00:41:45.005

to always just try out there if you're just starting out

897

00:41:45.005 --> 00:41:47.645

to try to dip your toe into what u uua resources there are.

898

00:41:48.265 --> 00:41:50.805

And that's along with calling your field staff,

899

00:41:50.835 --> 00:41:52.565

your regional staff, your primary contact.

900

00:41:52.775 --> 00:41:54.685

Those are all synonyms for the same person

901

00:41:54.865 --> 00:41:57.045

who is your person to take your call

902

00:41:57.105 --> 00:41:58.445

and answer some questions.

903

00:41:58.985 --> 00:42:01.005

That's our job. We're always available to,

904

00:42:01.265 --> 00:42:02.325

um, answer those calls.

905

00:42:02.865 --> 00:42:06.445

So that's also an excellent first place to start, start for

906

00:42:07.835 --> 00:42:10.875

these particular times, what we're hearing people ask

907

00:42:11.055 --> 00:42:15.075

for in, in particular are how do we respond to these times

908

00:42:15.805 --> 00:42:18.915

given all the chaos and madness that is happening around us.

909

00:42:19.415 --> 00:42:21.515

And so I really have to credit side with love

910

00:42:21.575 --> 00:42:23.475

for doing a very comprehensive job

911

00:42:23.475 --> 00:42:24.595

of helping folks with that.

912

00:42:24.825 --> 00:42:28.435

They have, um, both a monthly gathering called the Gathering

913

00:42:28.625 --> 00:42:32.835

Monthly, the Gathering, um, which is to an opportunity

914

00:42:33.135 --> 00:42:34.795

to spend about 90 minutes

915

00:42:34.895 --> 00:42:38.235

or maybe it's 75 minutes to get some grounding.

916

00:42:38.955 --> 00:42:41.915

Remember your values, ground in love, build your resilience,

917

00:42:42.645 --> 00:42:45.235

learn a little something and take action together.

918

00:42:46.135 --> 00:42:48.195

And another area that you might be particularly interested

919

00:42:48.195 --> 00:42:51.355

in is, um, they then have a subsequent meeting,

920

00:42:51.365 --> 00:42:53.435

which is called Now What The Gathering

921

00:42:53.495 --> 00:42:54.675

for Congregational Leaders.

922

00:42:55.295 --> 00:42:56.635

And that's an opportunity to take some

923

00:42:56.635 --> 00:42:58.515

of the content from the gathering

924

00:42:59.095 --> 00:43:01.835

and to allow congregational leaders to meet with each other

925

00:43:01.895 --> 00:43:04.115

to talk about, well, given this thing that we've learned

926

00:43:04.175 --> 00:43:07.435

or this, um, situation that we're, we're highlighting,

927

00:43:08.145 --> 00:43:10.155

what is your congregation gonna do about it?

928

00:43:10.335 --> 00:43:12.195

And we know on Congregational Life staff

929

00:43:12.195 --> 00:43:13.635

that you all learn best from each other.

930

00:43:14.095 --> 00:43:16.355

Um, it's a a fantastic opportunity to get ideas

931

00:43:16.535 --> 00:43:18.635

and to hash out what you're trying to do

932
00:43:18.775 --> 00:43:21.315
and just get some feeling of solidarity

933
00:43:21.315 --> 00:43:22.955
around all the people trying to do the same things

934
00:43:22.955 --> 00:43:25.595
that you are continental wide wide.

935
00:43:26.015 --> 00:43:30.405
So I recommend that we also have this,

936
00:43:30.505 --> 00:43:32.385
um, emerging.

937
00:43:32.935 --> 00:43:34.785
It's not emerging in the sense that it's not complete,

938
00:43:34.805 --> 00:43:36.945
it is complete, but we're constantly updating it.

939
00:43:37.125 --> 00:43:39.025
Um, the Community Resilience Hub,

940
00:43:39.395 --> 00:43:42.465
which is a one stop shopping web landing page

941
00:43:42.525 --> 00:43:44.265
for resources on safety

942
00:43:44.725 --> 00:43:48.105
and security, how to build leaders in these times, how

943
00:43:48.105 --> 00:43:49.505
to grow activists who are ready.

944
00:43:50.165 --> 00:43:52.785
Um, this is updated as we get more information

945

00:43:53.125 --> 00:43:56.265
and that the information on that comes from experiences

946
00:43:56.265 --> 00:43:59.265
that congregations are having nationwide in lots

947
00:43:59.265 --> 00:44:00.825
of tricky areas and in the areas

948
00:44:00.825 --> 00:44:03.305
that you didn't know were tricky until something happened.

949
00:44:03.965 --> 00:44:05.465
So if you are the kind of person

950
00:44:05.605 --> 00:44:08.945
who might be on your more safety property, um,

951
00:44:09.375 --> 00:44:13.025
general first aid kind of mindset in your congregation

952
00:44:13.085 --> 00:44:14.865
and you're really thinking, okay,

953
00:44:14.865 --> 00:44:16.505
well if we take this step in the

954
00:44:16.505 --> 00:44:17.985
community, what's the blow back?

955
00:44:17.985 --> 00:44:19.625
How will we handle any blow back that might come?

956
00:44:20.125 --> 00:44:22.945
Um, this is a great place to connect with a community

957
00:44:22.945 --> 00:44:24.505
who can really help you figure all that out.

958
00:44:26.345 --> 00:44:28.565
And I would be remiss if I did not just say a couple

959

00:44:28.565 --> 00:44:29.765

of our newest, um,

960

00:44:30.065 --> 00:44:33.565

our newest overall just general congregational resources.

961

00:44:33.895 --> 00:44:35.685

Nancy mentioned our class called

962

00:44:35.685 --> 00:44:37.165

Attending Congregational Life.

963

00:44:37.595 --> 00:44:38.885

This was created in concert

964

00:44:38.995 --> 00:44:40.405

with our membership professionals

965

00:44:40.505 --> 00:44:44.245

and it's all about like how to attract and grow

966

00:44:44.305 --> 00:44:45.405

and keep your members.

967

00:44:45.785 --> 00:44:47.645

Um, knowing that that's a really big concern

968

00:44:47.645 --> 00:44:48.645

for our congregations.

969

00:44:49.065 --> 00:44:51.565

That's really pretty hot off the presses

970

00:44:51.585 --> 00:44:53.325

and it's our most popular, um,

971

00:44:53.585 --> 00:44:55.405

ins UU Institute class right now.

972

00:44:55.785 --> 00:44:56.845

So I recommend it to you.

973

00:44:57.755 --> 00:45:00.645

Another thing we've put together this past year is, um,

974

00:45:00.925 --> 00:45:02.085

a collection of materials

975

00:45:02.085 --> 00:45:04.405

that we're calling congregational life cycles.

976

00:45:05.455 --> 00:45:07.865

Because we recognize that congregations like they,

977

00:45:08.415 --> 00:45:11.545

they become born, they emerge, they become robust,

978

00:45:11.815 --> 00:45:13.145

they enter a period of decline,

979

00:45:13.175 --> 00:45:15.385

they make different decisions, they rise again.

980

00:45:15.725 --> 00:45:18.185

And sometimes a congregation just decides that,

981

00:45:18.335 --> 00:45:19.825

that their time is trying to a close

982

00:45:19.845 --> 00:45:22.225

and they want to, um, figure out how to best leave a legacy

983

00:45:22.775 --> 00:45:25.825

both for the faith and with the resources they have.

984

00:45:26.565 --> 00:45:28.945

And so this congregational life cycles,

985

00:45:28.945 --> 00:45:30.105

if you are in a congregation

986
00:45:30.105 --> 00:45:32.465
that feels a little bit like it's stuck

987
00:45:32.605 --> 00:45:34.345
or needs to make some new decisions,

988
00:45:34.725 --> 00:45:36.425
or if you really need to sell your building

989
00:45:36.645 --> 00:45:39.145
or if you are thinking about dissolving, um,

990
00:45:39.275 --> 00:45:41.825
there are steps in all of those with resources for each

991
00:45:41.825 --> 00:45:44.955
of those, each of those kinds of situations.

992
00:45:45.015 --> 00:45:46.195
So I hope you'll take a look.

993
00:45:47.605 --> 00:45:50.705
And finally, after my long-winded, um, series

994
00:45:50.725 --> 00:45:54.575
of resource sharing, um, you may have heard

995
00:45:54.575 --> 00:45:56.375
of our wave cohort conversations

996
00:45:56.485 --> 00:45:58.495
that Ashley Haran has been putting together

997
00:45:58.515 --> 00:46:01.055
and that we have dived into as a UUA

998
00:46:01.055 --> 00:46:02.455
and as the attorney universalist,

999

00:46:02.455 --> 00:46:03.815
it was all over general assembly.

1000
00:46:03.845 --> 00:46:08.295
This year I am doing a wave cohort myself,

1001
00:46:08.385 --> 00:46:11.655
which is really, um, a learning opportunity around a series

1002
00:46:11.675 --> 00:46:14.695
of questions to help us identify what moment we're in

1003
00:46:14.695 --> 00:46:17.055
and what next steps we might wanna take in that moment.

1004
00:46:17.835 --> 00:46:20.175
Um, the series of conversations I'm running are called

1005
00:46:20.175 --> 00:46:23.695
Helping Our Communities Thrive Congregational Life Work,

1006
00:46:23.915 --> 00:46:28.695
and they are meant to help me ask with different,

1007
00:46:28.915 --> 00:46:32.375
um, stakeholder groups, what helps our communities

1008
00:46:32.375 --> 00:46:33.935
to flourish and

1009
00:46:33.935 --> 00:46:36.375
what effective offerings congregational life field staff

1010
00:46:36.375 --> 00:46:38.215
could provide towards that flourishing.

1011
00:46:38.635 --> 00:46:42.575
And that data will help, um, the Congregational life team

1012
00:46:42.885 --> 00:46:45.775
that I'm the deputy director of determined some priorities

1013
00:46:45.775 --> 00:46:47.175
and focus in our next chapter.

1014
00:46:48.075 --> 00:46:49.695
So my final link for you is

1015
00:46:49.695 --> 00:46:51.815
that if you are interested in having, being a part

1016
00:46:51.815 --> 00:46:55.015
of these conversations, we have several events coming up,

1017
00:46:55.015 --> 00:46:56.935
several conversations scheduled out,

1018
00:46:56.995 --> 00:47:01.695
and the ones the one for lay leaders is on Monday the 29th.

1019
00:47:01.955 --> 00:47:03.575
So if you are a lay leader

1020
00:47:03.575 --> 00:47:06.055
and you wanna jump in on that, now is the time to register.

1021
00:47:06.635 --> 00:47:09.615
We also have a conversation for folks, um,

1022
00:47:09.685 --> 00:47:12.655
that centralized center marginalized voices,

1023
00:47:13.715 --> 00:47:15.295
and we have a conversation

1024
00:47:15.315 --> 00:47:17.255
for religious professionals specifically.

1025
00:47:17.255 --> 00:47:20.095
And those are on October 8th and October 23rd.

1026

00:47:20.165 --> 00:47:22.655

It's on the link. Um, please join me

1027

00:47:22.655 --> 00:47:24.295

and I would love to just be able

1028

00:47:24.295 --> 00:47:26.055

to pick your brain a little bit about what, um,

1029

00:47:26.365 --> 00:47:27.975

what is useful and helpful to you.

1030

00:47:29.645 --> 00:47:30.695

Whew, Nancy,

1031

00:47:32.785 --> 00:47:35.645

I'm just over here being your friendly neighborhood

1032

00:47:35.955 --> 00:47:37.005

dropper of links.

1033

00:47:37.505 --> 00:47:41.405

Um, but it is also my task to say thank you.

1034

00:47:41.765 --> 00:47:43.885

I mean, obviously you can,

1035

00:47:44.145 --> 00:47:46.525

you can see from the report in front of you, um,

1036

00:47:46.795 --> 00:47:50.125

that a good deal of labor goes into interpreting

1037

00:47:50.145 --> 00:47:52.325

and creating this report.

1038

00:47:53.235 --> 00:47:56.245

Some of it indeed are the people you have been able to meet

1039

00:47:56.385 --> 00:47:58.445

and that we'll have some q and a here in a minute.

1040
00:47:58.465 --> 00:48:00.565
You, you'll get to pose your questions to tonight.

1041
00:48:00.575 --> 00:48:04.645
Larry, Megan, myself, certainly Ashley Horan, uh,

1042
00:48:04.705 --> 00:48:07.165
our Vice President of programs and ministries.

1043
00:48:07.985 --> 00:48:11.895
But I also wanna lift maybe the real like, um,

1044
00:48:12.855 --> 00:48:15.535
champions in this certification process,

1045
00:48:16.425 --> 00:48:19.575
which are the congregational administrators, some paid

1046
00:48:19.635 --> 00:48:20.815
and some lay leaders

1047
00:48:21.315 --> 00:48:24.775
who are filling out this questionnaire questionnaire year after year.

1048
00:48:25.115 --> 00:48:26.575
So one of the things we hold

1049
00:48:26.575 --> 00:48:30.535
before us is that the questionnaire has to be

1050
00:48:30.635 --> 00:48:32.255
as useful as possible.

1051
00:48:32.755 --> 00:48:35.495
It also has to be, uh, doable.

1052
00:48:35.915 --> 00:48:40.775
Um, because indeed, if we are an association where half

1053

00:48:40.775 --> 00:48:45.175
of our congregations are under 150 members,

1054
00:48:45.355 --> 00:48:48.495
we are an association where dedicated lay leaders, like many

1055
00:48:48.515 --> 00:48:51.495
of you are doing this work and so much more.

1056
00:48:51.835 --> 00:48:55.375
So we wanna make sure that we keep the instrument manageable

1057
00:48:55.795 --> 00:48:57.215
and still we know it's a task.

1058
00:48:57.675 --> 00:48:58.895
So the last thing I wanna do

1059
00:48:58.895 --> 00:49:02.775
before we open chat for questions

1060
00:49:03.315 --> 00:49:06.815
is I do wanna say it is so important to our vitality

1061
00:49:07.315 --> 00:49:11.215
and to our ability to think strategically that we continue

1062
00:49:11.275 --> 00:49:13.815
to be faithful in filling out this questionnaire.

1063
00:49:14.275 --> 00:49:17.095
Um, even when it feels like quite a task,

1064
00:49:17.565 --> 00:49:21.615
it's very important that we ground ourselves in reality

1065
00:49:22.195 --> 00:49:24.975
as we think forward with creativity.

1066
00:49:25.635 --> 00:49:28.935
Um, and then the only I will make a pitch,

1067
00:49:29.055 --> 00:49:31.615
I will allow myself the, the generous space

1068
00:49:31.675 --> 00:49:34.695
to make a mild pitch was that, which is that

1069
00:49:35.395 --> 00:49:38.215
in these times it feels acutely that

1070
00:49:39.215 --> 00:49:40.335
progressive institutions

1071
00:49:40.555 --> 00:49:43.135
and certainly institutions of progressive faith

1072
00:49:43.835 --> 00:49:44.855
are increasingly

1073
00:49:45.075 --> 00:49:48.455
and acutely at risk, which means

1074
00:49:48.765 --> 00:49:53.015
that it is perhaps more important than ever for us

1075
00:49:53.715 --> 00:49:54.855
to uphold

1076
00:49:55.315 --> 00:49:59.455
and support those institutions of progressive faith.

1077
00:49:59.925 --> 00:50:02.495
That includes through a PF contributions.

1078
00:50:02.675 --> 00:50:04.935
It concludes through your own generosity,

1079
00:50:05.275 --> 00:50:08.535
and you'll see some new strategies rolling out around a PF

1080

00:50:08.535 --> 00:50:10.695
and around individual giving to the UUA.

1081
00:50:11.245 --> 00:50:15.455
When I get on my soap box, what I need to tell people is

1082
00:50:15.455 --> 00:50:17.255
that if we can't be stewards

1083
00:50:17.255 --> 00:50:19.895
of progressive institutions right now,

1084
00:50:20.505 --> 00:50:23.295
those progressive institutions won't have the resilience

1085
00:50:23.925 --> 00:50:26.055
that they need in order to make it

1086
00:50:26.055 --> 00:50:27.845
through these very complex times.

1087
00:50:28.585 --> 00:50:30.405
And it is so much harder

1088
00:50:31.265 --> 00:50:33.925
to build a bridge from scratch than

1089
00:50:33.945 --> 00:50:36.925
to keep the bridge standing in the first place.

1090
00:50:37.945 --> 00:50:42.125
And indeed, our Unitarian Universalist association for all

1091
00:50:42.125 --> 00:50:44.805
that it is, sometimes we feel so scrappy like we're working

1092
00:50:44.805 --> 00:50:47.565
with duct tape and all sorts of, um,

1093
00:50:47.915 --> 00:50:50.365
very earnest efforts over here to make it happen.

1094
00:50:50.505 --> 00:50:55.125
But what it is, is the single place which can hold the heart

1095
00:50:55.545 --> 00:50:57.325
of this progressive faith

1096
00:50:57.745 --> 00:51:00.645
as we move forward into the faith toge into the future

1097
00:51:01.005 --> 00:51:04.765
together, it is that connective tissue, um,

1098
00:51:04.905 --> 00:51:06.885
for the institutions that matter most,

1099
00:51:07.135 --> 00:51:09.685
which we know are your congregations and communities.

1100
00:51:10.185 --> 00:51:14.445
So our our endeavor is to hold the heart

1101
00:51:14.625 --> 00:51:16.045
of the faith together.

1102
00:51:16.585 --> 00:51:20.565
And as I stop my little sermon, um, I will say the,

1103
00:51:21.105 --> 00:51:24.405
the space is now open for your questions.

1104
00:51:25.645 --> 00:51:28.525
I did see that we had one question about

1105
00:51:29.145 --> 00:51:31.525
way back about the definition

1106
00:51:32.465 --> 00:51:36.285
of a covenanting congregation from Joanne Mulready Schick,

1107

00:51:36.745 --> 00:51:41.205
and perhaps Megan has already answered that, Joanne, if you

1108
00:51:41.805 --> 00:51:42.805
A link in. But,

1109
00:51:42.805 --> 00:51:45.405
um, it's a covenanting community

1110
00:51:45.745 --> 00:51:48.125
and that is a opening for different kinds

1111
00:51:48.125 --> 00:51:49.765
of unitarian universalist communities

1112
00:51:49.765 --> 00:51:51.805
that aren't in a congregational shape.

1113
00:51:52.305 --> 00:51:53.565
So for example, a classic

1114
00:51:53.625 --> 00:51:56.085
around my area in DC would be a community

1115
00:51:56.085 --> 00:51:57.765
that is in a retirement community

1116
00:51:58.345 --> 00:52:00.645
or, uh, umbrella homeschooling.

1117
00:52:00.665 --> 00:52:02.765
We also have an umbrella homeschooling network

1118
00:52:03.235 --> 00:52:05.485
that is run under Unitarian Universalist values.

1119
00:52:05.675 --> 00:52:07.405
It's not ever gonna be a congregation,

1120
00:52:07.625 --> 00:52:09.205
but it is us something.

1121
00:52:09.665 --> 00:52:12.445
And years ago we decided that we wanted to create an avenue

1122
00:52:12.585 --> 00:52:14.645
so it didn't just have to be one form

1123
00:52:14.665 --> 00:52:18.565
of our faith gatherings, especially when that form is,

1124
00:52:19.065 --> 00:52:22.445
you know, it's a form that was invented in 1945

1125
00:52:22.665 --> 00:52:25.005
and is not always so, um,

1126
00:52:25.905 --> 00:52:29.165
so not always the right fit for the needs at the time.

1127
00:52:29.265 --> 00:52:30.525
So that's what those are.

1128
00:52:31.385 --> 00:52:32.635
Perfect, thank you Megan.

1129
00:52:32.975 --> 00:52:35.235
And I see Leslie Reynolds has asked,

1130
00:52:35.595 --> 00:52:37.515
I don't quite understand the re data,

1131
00:52:38.055 --> 00:52:41.955
what's interesting slash relevant about the enrolled

1132
00:52:42.405 --> 00:52:43.795
slash unenrolled.

1133
00:52:44.495 --> 00:52:47.635
Has that changed over time? And what does it mean?

1134

00:52:48.295 --> 00:52:49.835

What's this data telling us?

1135

00:52:50.295 --> 00:52:52.235

So I'll take an initial crack at it

1136

00:52:52.255 --> 00:52:53.835

and then invite my colleagues to,

1137

00:52:53.895 --> 00:52:55.595

to fill in some of the gaps.

1138

00:52:56.135 --> 00:52:59.395

Um, I think it's, it's safe to say that

1139

00:53:00.355 --> 00:53:04.235

a traditional pattern of arriving, um,

1140

00:53:04.375 --> 00:53:05.715

in your congregational space

1141

00:53:06.055 --> 00:53:08.875

and enrolling your kid in religious education

1142

00:53:09.295 --> 00:53:11.315

as the single metric of whether

1143

00:53:11.315 --> 00:53:13.635

or not they're participating has changed.

1144

00:53:14.475 --> 00:53:18.955

I was telling Betty earlier in the chat that my own child

1145

00:53:19.665 --> 00:53:21.675

does not attend religious education,

1146

00:53:22.055 --> 00:53:24.235

but she goes every single Sunday

1147

00:53:24.375 --> 00:53:27.605

to the congregation we are a member of to volunteer

1148
00:53:28.145 --> 00:53:31.845
at a food instability nonprofit that the congregation runs.

1149
00:53:32.305 --> 00:53:35.485
And in doing so, she is in fact interacting

1150
00:53:35.485 --> 00:53:38.205
with our lifespan religious education professionals

1151
00:53:38.465 --> 00:53:41.445
who are helping to support that food instability nonprofit.

1152
00:53:41.555 --> 00:53:42.805
This is a 16-year-old

1153
00:53:43.065 --> 00:53:47.005
and you see this across the board, not just in patterns of

1154
00:53:47.065 --> 00:53:51.205
how often, uh, families are going to religious education,

1155
00:53:51.425 --> 00:53:54.245
but just in how they are engaging in the ways in which

1156
00:53:54.855 --> 00:53:57.685
whole church religious education, the, um,

1157
00:53:58.225 --> 00:54:01.605
across the lifespan, um, are worshiping together,

1158
00:54:01.955 --> 00:54:02.965
serving together,

1159
00:54:03.185 --> 00:54:05.405
and learning together in formats

1160
00:54:05.405 --> 00:54:07.605
that might not be the traditional Sunday school.

1161

00:54:08.185 --> 00:54:10.925

So what we wanna lift up is that all of

1162

00:54:10.925 --> 00:54:15.005

that requires professional lifespan, religious education,

1163

00:54:15.385 --> 00:54:18.885

and it may well be that often when we measure just

1164

00:54:19.885 --> 00:54:22.485

religious education, enrollment

1165

00:54:22.945 --> 00:54:26.205

but not participation, we are

1166

00:54:26.745 --> 00:54:29.645

not capturing the fullness of the community

1167

00:54:29.645 --> 00:54:32.445

that our religious education educators are serving.

1168

00:54:33.225 --> 00:54:36.165

Um, does that more or less sum it up?

1169

00:54:36.185 --> 00:54:38.045

And is there anything you'd like to add, Larry

1170

00:54:38.145 --> 00:54:40.725

or Megan, especially Larry, anything you'd like

1171

00:54:40.725 --> 00:54:44.805

to add about your understanding of why we showed, um, uh,

1172

00:54:45.625 --> 00:54:48.245

why we showed the unenrolled in unenrolled numbers

1173

00:54:48.345 --> 00:54:49.765

and how that has changed over time?

1174

00:54:50.315 --> 00:54:52.525

Yeah, so the, at the addition

1175
00:54:52.525 --> 00:54:54.405
of the unenrolled numbers is brand new.

1176
00:54:54.705 --> 00:54:57.245
We started collecting that this, this past cycle.

1177
00:54:57.865 --> 00:54:59.125
And so we have no history

1178
00:54:59.125 --> 00:55:01.045
to look back on those particular numbers.

1179
00:55:01.225 --> 00:55:03.605
And so when we look at reporting this out,

1180
00:55:03.635 --> 00:55:05.405
this will eventually start evolving,

1181
00:55:05.905 --> 00:55:08.325
but right now we only have one year set of data to,

1182
00:55:08.325 --> 00:55:09.965
to report out the unenrolled

1183
00:55:09.985 --> 00:55:11.405
and the enrolled numbers together.

1184
00:55:11.475 --> 00:55:15.005
Traditionally, we have enrollment numbers going way back,

1185
00:55:15.665 --> 00:55:17.605
um, and we haven't tracked down the history of that,

1186
00:55:17.605 --> 00:55:19.525
but that language has also evolved over time.

1187
00:55:19.585 --> 00:55:22.925
And so when you look at, you know, what used to

1188

00:55:23.035 --> 00:55:25.405

what congregations defined as enrollment versus

1189

00:55:25.405 --> 00:55:27.645

what the EA is asking for in terms of

1190

00:55:27.665 --> 00:55:29.765

how we defined enrollment sometimes differed.

1191

00:55:29.765 --> 00:55:32.845

And so how that definition changed over the year has

1192

00:55:33.565 --> 00:55:35.805

possibly contributed to a continued decline

1193

00:55:35.865 --> 00:55:37.165

of that enrollment number.

1194

00:55:37.165 --> 00:55:39.485

And so we're, we're trying to get to a new space in terms of

1195

00:55:40.645 --> 00:55:42.125

creating a clear language

1196

00:55:42.185 --> 00:55:45.645

and clear definitions around an enrollment on enrollment so

1197

00:55:45.645 --> 00:55:47.725

that as we report this and start collecting this year

1198

00:55:47.725 --> 00:55:50.005

after year, there's a little bit more sta stability in those

1199

00:55:50.005 --> 00:55:53.125

numbers to help support our religious educators

1200

00:55:53.265 --> 00:55:54.565

and understanding these trends.

1201

00:55:58.375 --> 00:56:00.215

I just wanna add, I I can't help but add

1202
00:56:00.215 --> 00:56:02.895
because people ask us all the time, how do I,

1203
00:56:03.235 --> 00:56:05.735
how do I bring back my re program?

1204
00:56:06.075 --> 00:56:07.135
How can we make it work?

1205
00:56:07.355 --> 00:56:08.535
And the answer to that,

1206
00:56:08.535 --> 00:56:11.495
which I think I've just realized is reflected in this kind

1207
00:56:11.495 --> 00:56:15.935
of data collection is that you need to ask parents what they

1208
00:56:16.075 --> 00:56:18.415
and kids, what they, what they're looking for.

1209
00:56:18.995 --> 00:56:22.855
It is not helpful to say, to keep saying, well,

1210
00:56:22.855 --> 00:56:25.005
we have this thing and you come every week

1211
00:56:25.465 --> 00:56:26.565
and you sign up your kids.

1212
00:56:26.665 --> 00:56:30.405
So we have a, we document your child, you come every week

1213
00:56:30.505 --> 00:56:31.645
and you sit in a classroom.

1214
00:56:32.305 --> 00:56:36.005
Um, parents, you're probably following are all

1215

00:56:36.065 --> 00:56:38.165
and know from your own families are all across

1216
00:56:38.165 --> 00:56:39.245
the board and what their needs are.

1217
00:56:39.265 --> 00:56:43.525
And yet they are approaching, um, religious communities kind

1218
00:56:43.525 --> 00:56:46.565
of in droves, but they're approaching saying, I just, I,

1219
00:56:46.585 --> 00:56:48.845
my kid needs to learn how to be social again.

1220
00:56:48.905 --> 00:56:52.885
My kid needs some values, moral guidance, I cannot help.

1221
00:56:53.105 --> 00:56:56.165
We are at capacity all the time. Also, we're very busy.

1222
00:56:56.665 --> 00:56:59.485
Um, there's just any number of really kind of insightful

1223
00:56:59.485 --> 00:57:00.845
and new needs that kids have.

1224
00:57:01.225 --> 00:57:02.565
And I think this data is sort

1225
00:57:02.565 --> 00:57:06.525
of reflecting when a program is able to shift from

1226
00:57:06.555 --> 00:57:10.245
what it knows it can do into a more of experimental area

1227
00:57:10.255 --> 00:57:13.085
where it tries out something that it's hearing is needed.

1228
00:57:13.345 --> 00:57:16.005
And it's exactly that orientation that if you bring

1229
00:57:16.005 --> 00:57:19.075
to all parts of church, make a church thrive,

1230
00:57:19.705 --> 00:57:22.595
it's when you are listening to what the community needs

1231
00:57:22.735 --> 00:57:23.915
and you know what you can bring

1232
00:57:23.975 --> 00:57:25.755
and you bring, you marry those two together.

1233
00:57:26.055 --> 00:57:27.475
So I just wanna throw that in there

1234
00:57:28.875 --> 00:57:32.695
And if I give my, um, sort of long-winded thing,

1235
00:57:32.935 --> 00:57:34.815
a tiny little summary, you can say

1236
00:57:35.355 --> 00:57:37.935
the enrollment numbers are leveling,

1237
00:57:38.595 --> 00:57:41.655
but we're trying to give a more nuanced number so

1238
00:57:41.655 --> 00:57:44.895
that we understand the fullness of who we are serving

1239
00:57:45.435 --> 00:57:47.375
in these programs and how we're serving them.

1240
00:57:47.535 --> 00:57:49.055
I hope that, I hope

1241
00:57:49.055 --> 00:57:51.655
that gives you at least a little bit more to, to chew on

1242

00:57:51.655 --> 00:57:53.735
or to start to interpret in your own ways.

1243
00:57:54.195 --> 00:57:56.975
Leslie, um, anybody else,

1244
00:58:00.935 --> 00:58:03.945
just drop it in the chat and, and I will lift it up and

1245
00:58:03.945 --> 00:58:07.625
otherwise we can release you onward to your dinner.

1246
00:58:12.955 --> 00:58:14.695
All right, good. Leslie said that cleared up for me.

1247
00:58:14.695 --> 00:58:18.175
That makes me feel good. All right. Anybody else?

1248
00:58:20.495 --> 00:58:20.785
Okay,

1249
00:58:24.325 --> 00:58:26.455
team, I think that's it.

1250
00:58:27.035 --> 00:58:28.855
Um, thank you indeed for being here.

1251
00:58:29.315 --> 00:58:33.575
Please invite your colleagues, uh, fellow leaders, fellow

1252
00:58:34.635 --> 00:58:38.695
clergy, um, whoever to join us for the next one of these.

1253
00:58:38.715 --> 00:58:40.695
We have another one coming up in October.

1254
00:58:41.195 --> 00:58:44.335
And please, please, please take this data and share

1255
00:58:44.335 --> 00:58:46.495
and interpret it in your congregation

1256
00:58:46.925 --> 00:58:51.055
because what we do not want is for any congregations

1257
00:58:51.115 --> 00:58:52.815
to feel like they are alone

1258
00:58:53.395 --> 00:58:56.735
or that they, I, I vividly remember there was a point

1259
00:58:56.735 --> 00:59:00.735
during the pandemic when our numbers didn't look like I

1260
00:59:00.735 --> 00:59:02.615
wanted them to in terms of viewership.

1261
00:59:02.635 --> 00:59:05.135
And I said, I think I personally, personally

1262
00:59:05.645 --> 00:59:07.535
will be the death of progressive religion.

1263
00:59:07.655 --> 00:59:09.375
I think it is me. I think it is my fault.

1264
00:59:09.935 --> 00:59:13.295
I want us all to know that indeed we are in it together

1265
00:59:13.315 --> 00:59:16.215
and we are in it together in the strategic possibilities

1266
00:59:16.915 --> 00:59:19.095
and in the very real challenges.

1267
00:59:19.755 --> 00:59:22.405
And it makes it so much more survivable

1268
00:59:22.755 --> 00:59:24.005
when we know we're not alone.

1269

00:59:24.265 --> 00:59:25.925

So thank you so much. Um,

1270

00:59:26.755 --> 00:59:28.845

Mary Mitchell asked if there will be a

1271

00:59:28.845 --> 00:59:30.085

recording of this video.

1272

00:59:30.985 --> 00:59:34.485

Yes, Betty is super on it. Okay. Thank you everybody.

1273

00:59:34.785 --> 00:59:36.165

Um, great to be with you.