



Stewardship Open Forum

2023 Survey Results

Mark Ewert and Barry Finkelstein

Revised June 13, 2023

Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

Every act of kindness, generosity, or love overflows its original bounds. Our acts of kindness, generosity, and love multiply. Stewardship is a call to transformation. Stewardship is an invitation to do new things in relationship with people in this community and beyond our walls. Generously giving of our time, talents, and treasure to this church community is a radical act of hope that has ripple effects that continue to multiply in people's lives and in the world. We give because we are invested in the creation of a truly Beloved Community for all.



Tina DeYoe, Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration
Unitarian Church of Los Alamos, NM



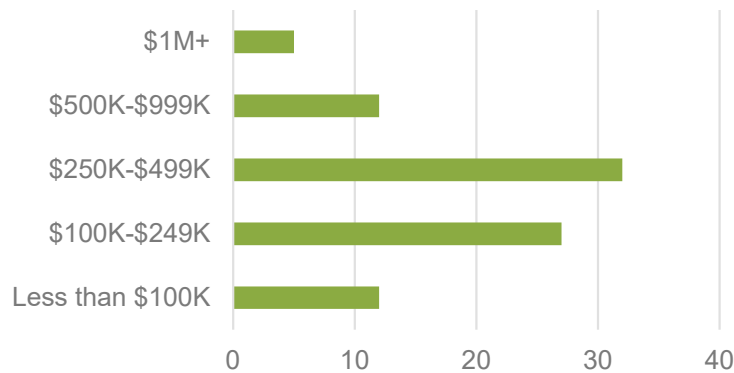
Highlights – Compared to 2020

- Continued excellent participation – 102 congregations, up from 92 last year
- Campaigns struggled slightly more than in 2021:
 - 75% of congregations achieved 90%+ of campaign goal, nearly identical to the 77%+ in 2021
 - 11% achieved <80% of goal; an increase from 6% in 2021
 - 57% of congregations increased their pledge totals this year, while 39% decreased, and 4% were unchanged
- More congregations experienced decreases than increases in basic parameters (Numbers of members, children and youth, and pledge units) since before the pandemic
- Pledge fulfillment remains strong, although it has dipped some over the pandemic years. 55% of congregations are currently experiencing fulfillment of >95% and another 27% report 90% to 95%. Corresponding numbers for pre-pandemic are: 60% reporting >95% fulfillment and 26% reporting 90% to 95%
- Comments indicated that some congregations have faced financial challenges with loss of rental income and reduced attendance, while others are growing

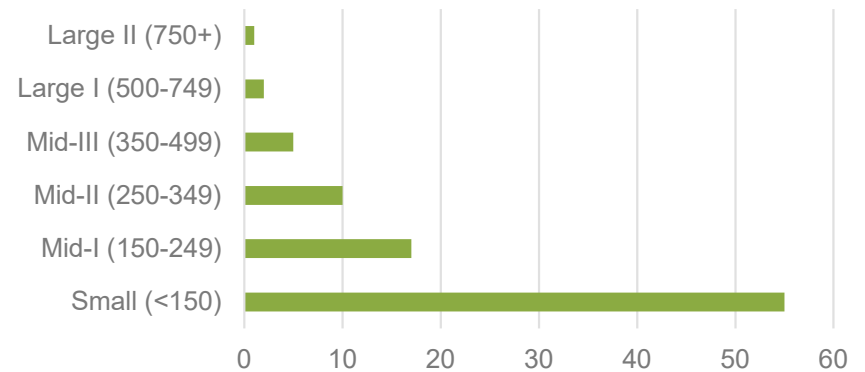


Distribution of Congregations

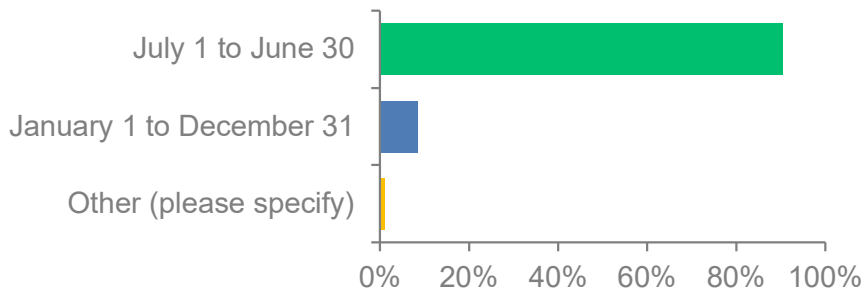
Distribution by Budget



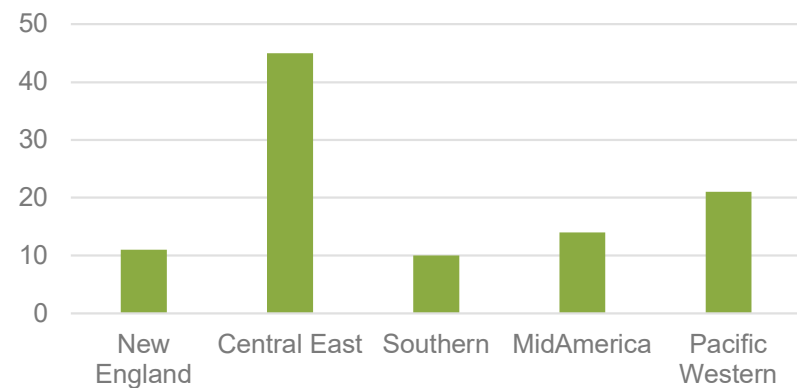
Distribution by Congregation Size



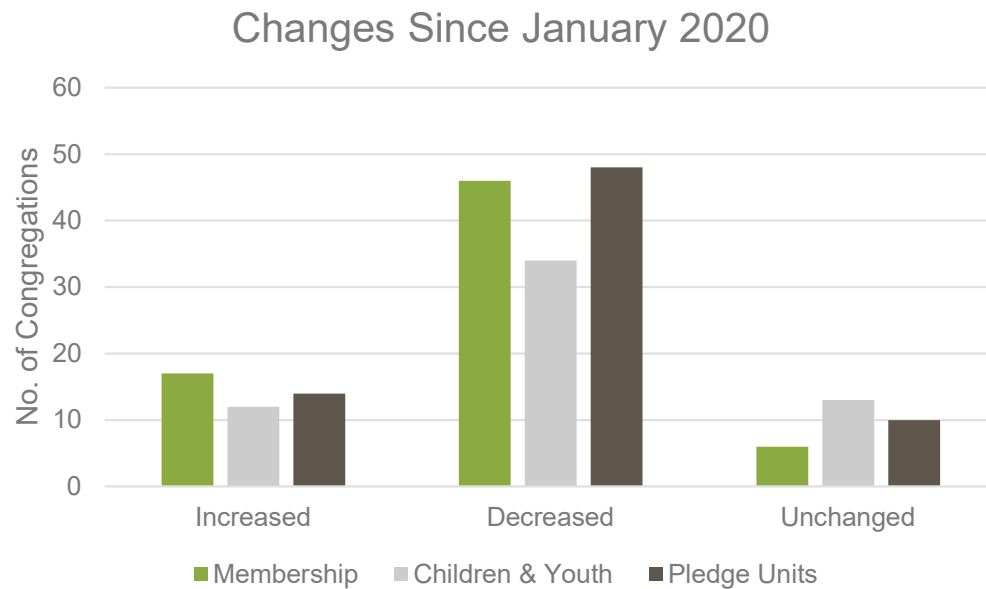
Fiscal Year



Distribution by UUA Region



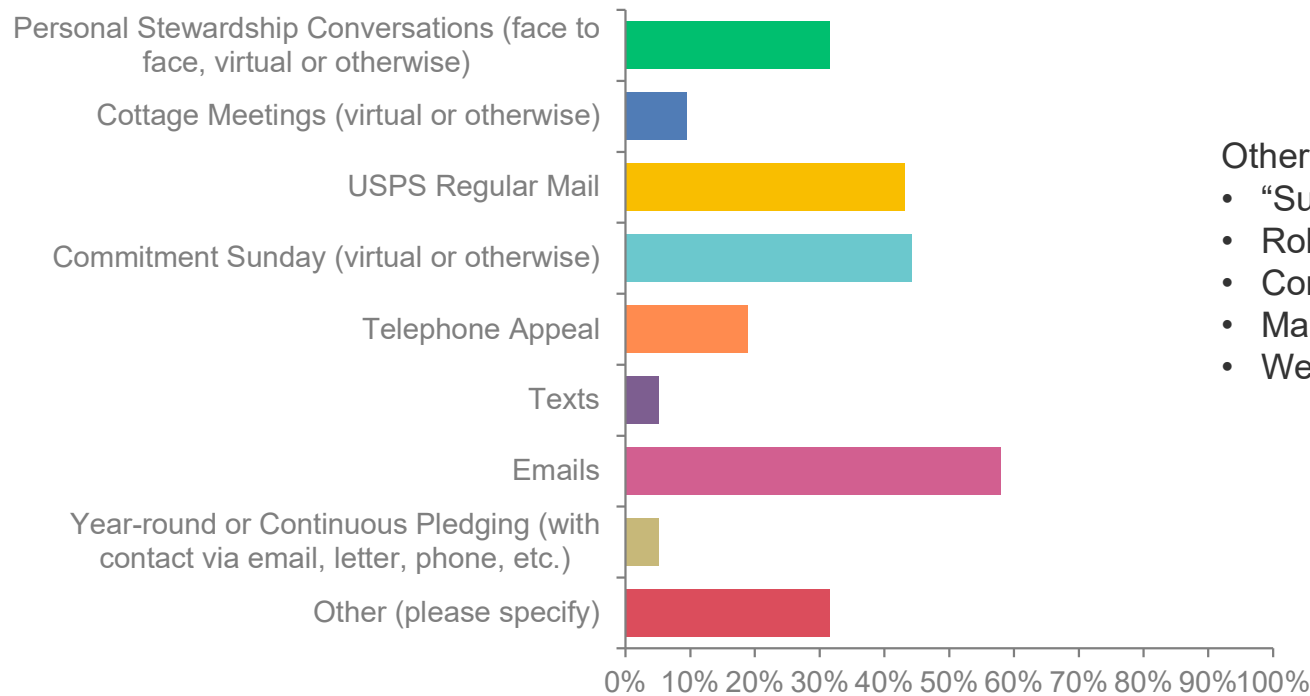
Changes in Key Parameters



Changes Since January 2020	Membership	Children & Youth	Pledge Units
Increased	17	12	14
Decreased	46	34	48
Unchanged	6	13	10
Total	69	59	72



Stewardship Methods Current



Other ideas/techniques include:

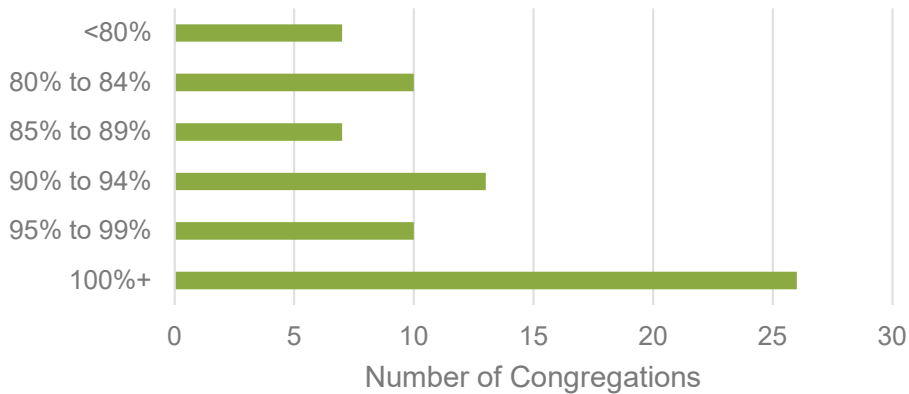
- “Surprise” pop-up Zoom testimonials
- Roll-over pledges for reliable pledgers
- Continuous pledging
- Many used all or most methods
- Website popup

- 51% of congregations changed methods this year, post-pandemic
- 43% retained the same methods



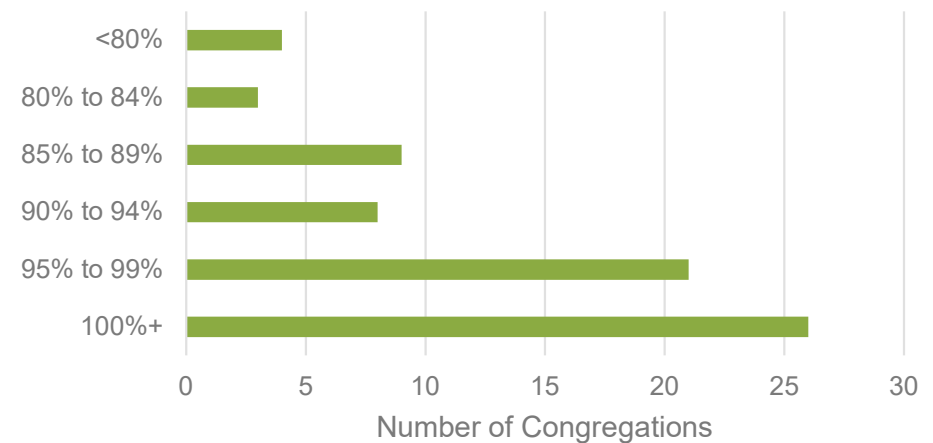
Percent of Goal Attained

Percent of Goal Attained Most Recent Campaign

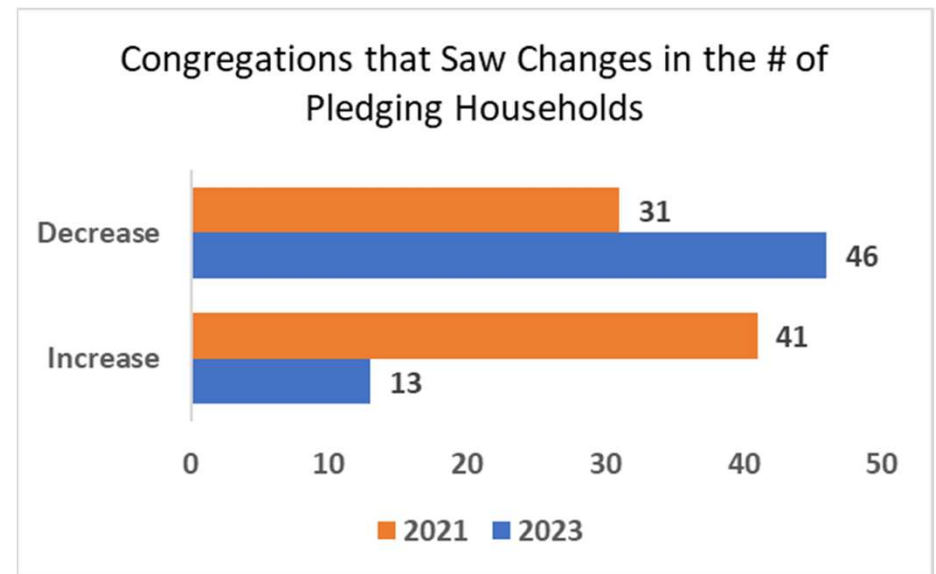
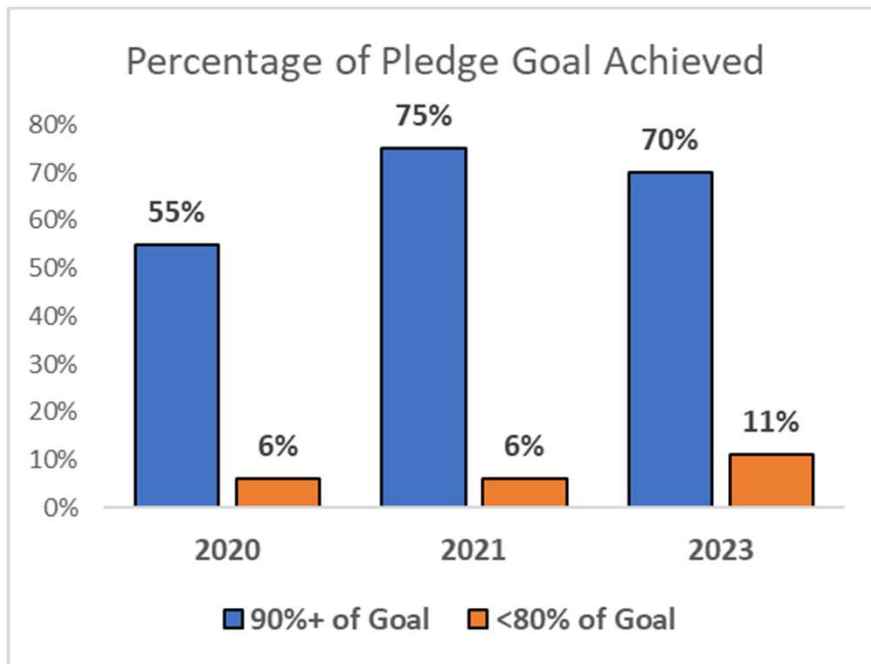


- 75% of congregations were at 90%+ Current
- 77% of congregations were at 90%+ for 2021

Percent of Goal Attained 2021



Year to Year Data

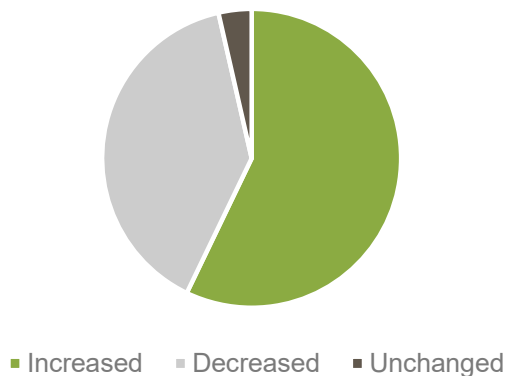


Note: Unlike all of the other charts in this report, which use data generated only from this year's responder group, these two charts compare data from responders in 2021 with responders this year, which may be from different congregations.



Change in Pledge Amount & Annual Budget

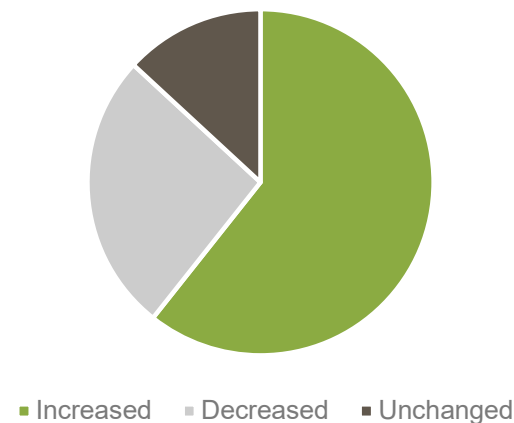
Change in Pledge Amount Year over Year



Pledge Highlights:

- 32 congregations (57%) increased by an average of \$21,000 or 6%
- 22 congregations (39%) decreased by an average of \$33,000 or 10%
- 2 congregations (4%) were unchanged

Change in Annual Budget Year over Year



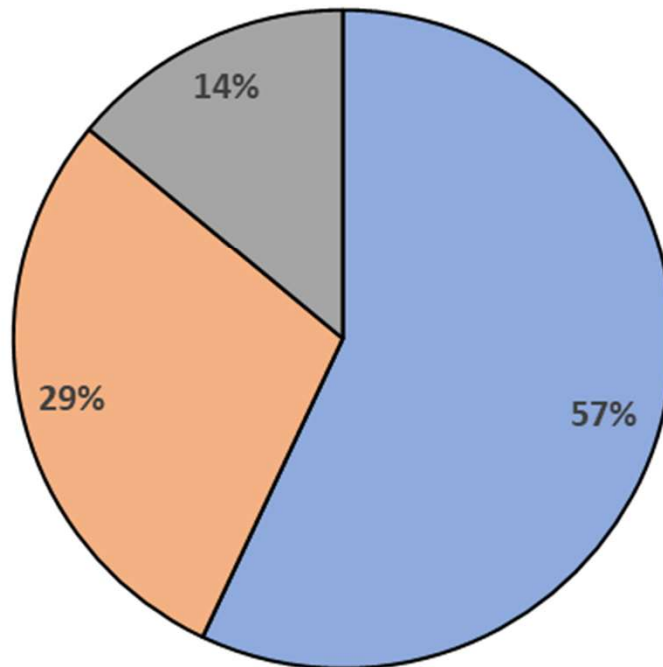
Budget Highlights:

- 37 congregations (61%) increased by an average of \$61,000 or 18%
- 16 congregations (26%) decreased by an average of \$24,000 or 7%
- 8 congregations (13%) were unchanged



Poll Results

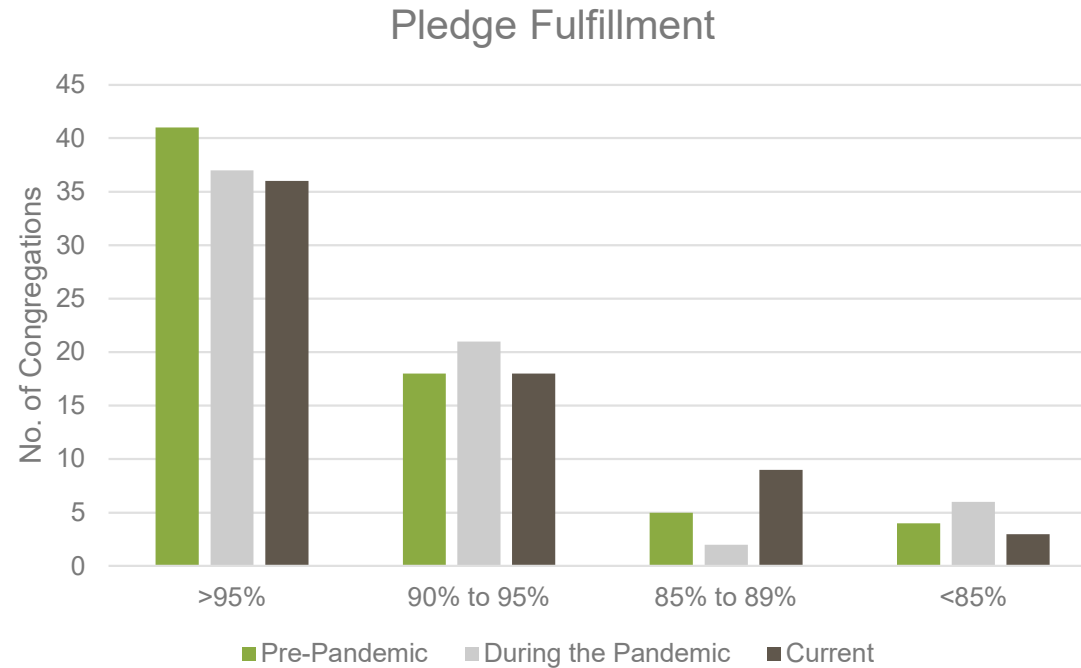
How are you working with your congregants now that both in-person and virtual participation is ongoing?



- We do pledging for the in-person congregants and hope the virtual folks join in (57%)
- We are doing both an in-person pledge drive and a distinct virtual pledge drive (29%)
- We have strategies, materials, and messages specifically for our virtual congregants (14%)



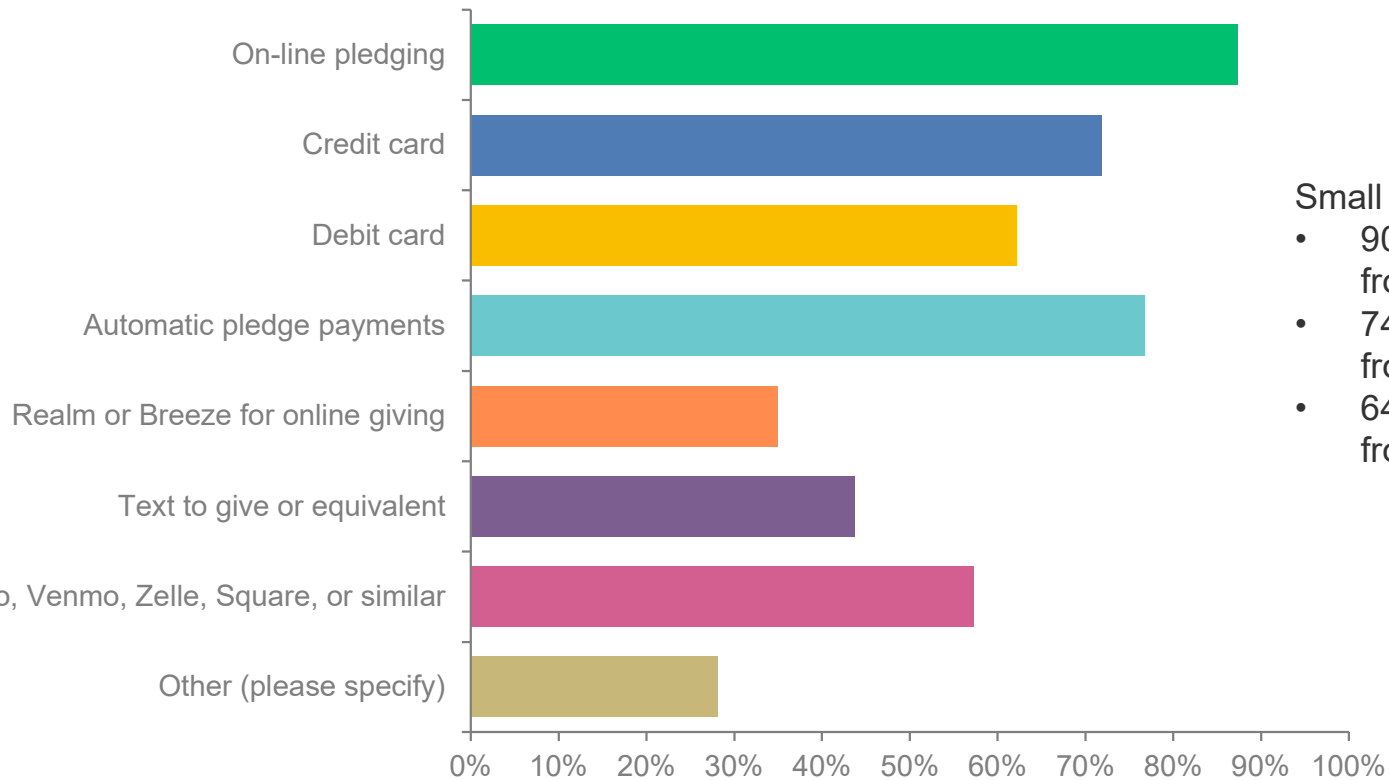
Pledge Fulfillment



- Fulfillment has slipped somewhat during the pandemic
- Fewer congregations report fulfillment over 95%



On-line Pledging and Payment Options



Small changes from 2021:

- 90% offer on-line pledging up from 82%
- 74% accept credit cards, up from 70%
- 64% accept debit cards, up from 52%



Selected Comments

- Small number of people contribute $\frac{3}{4}$ of our budget
- We're seeing fewer people in attendance on-site
- We are facing a financial struggle this year, post-pandemic
- We are slowly running through our savings and experiencing loss of rental income
- We do not have ready access to the data we need
- The pandemic brought more flexibility in how people can pledge – e.g., by email
- This year was a great surprise due to wonderful minister and growing congregation
- We've had significant membership growth these past 2 years
- We worked very hard to hire our first full time minister and the congregation stepped up to support this



Breakout Group Discussion and Sharing

Share your congregation's experience in terms of stewardship and engagement, focusing on the future:

- Given what you have learned this past year, what do you see for stewardship going forward?
- How can we apply personal engagement to the virtual participants?

Designate a scribe to summarize highlights of your conversation to the larger group



Closing Words

Stewardship is this crazy idea that we should treat other people's stuff better than our own. To me, stewardship is the act of taking care of something you were given whether or not you could acquire it for yourself in the first place. It's less of an environmental idea and more of a common courtesy, which is exactly what stewardship should be, common.

~ Eli Sowry



Thank you!

Lay Leaders, Ministers, UUA Staff, Congregational Staff



Stewardship FOR US
Building Cultures of Generosity and Commitment



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Stewardship For Us (S4Us)

- **A two-decade tradition of stewardship support to Unitarian Universalists for all size congregations and clusters**
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