



**The Camp and Church Leadership Project:
2020 ELCA Rostered Minister Survey**

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Introduction

This report details the findings of a survey of ELCA rostered ministers conducted as part of the Camp and Church Leadership Project (CCLP). The CCLP seeks to cultivate church leadership among young adults who have been engaged in camping ministries. The project focuses especially on the key characteristics and impacts of serving on Christian summer camp staff. The project is funded by a Youth and Young Adult Ministry Grant from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and centers on camps and congregational leaders in this denomination.

The survey of rostered ministers assessed the role of camp experiences on the faith formation and call story of pastors and deacons in the ELCA. The online survey was conducted from October 24-December 10, 2020. Two incentives were offered. Those who completed the survey were entered into a drawing for one of twenty Amazon gift cards. Three synods with the highest participation were also offered supplemental reports featuring their synod's data. The primary means of distribution was direct email from the ELCA national office to all rostered ministers. Bishops and synod offices were encouraged to promote the survey and distribute the survey link to ministers on their roster. Other stakeholders, including camp leaders and ELCA staff, supplemented these efforts through online promotion via social media in specialized groups, with particular attention to people of color. A Spanish language translation of the survey was made available and distributed through the synod office of the Caribbean Synod.

A total of 3,041 rostered ministers responded to the survey, representing a sample size of 18.1% of the entire roster and a margin of error of +/- 2%. The sample was evenly distributed throughout the ELCA, with each region having a sample between 15.9% (Regions 6 and 7) and 20.2% (Region 4). Responses came from each of the 65 synods, with no synod receiving responses from fewer than 11% of their roster. The demographic breakdown indicated a sample that was representative of the entire roster, particularly those currently serving in a ministry role (see part 1 for demographic discussion). The survey completion rate was 98%.

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Narrative Summary of Findings

Call stories are unique and complex. This project sought to zoom out and take a broad view of the relative importance of various experiences and other factors on call to rostered ministry in the ELCA. This survey investigated patterns of experience and trends. This is not to claim that each individual who fits a certain pattern has an identical experience. Rather, the patterns offer wisdom into how various ministries and experiences interact with and build from one another to form coherent call narratives. Most especially, this survey sought to capture the role of Christian summer camp experiences on the faith formation of rostered ministers and their call stories.

The survey revealed that Christian summer camp experiences are quite common among rostered ministers in the ELCA. Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents attended overnight Christian summer camp at least once as children or youth, and half (49%) attended multiple times. Two out of every five respondents (40%) served on summer staff at a Christian camp, including nearly a third (31%) serving on staff at a Lutheran Outdoor Ministry (LOM) camp. Respondents interpreted these experiences as highly impactful to their faith formation and call to ministry, particularly those with experiences at a LOM camp. Among those who attended camp at least once, over half (52%) said the experience was very or extremely important to their faith formation, and over a third (39%) said it was very or extremely important to their call to ministry. The experience of working on camp staff was much more consistently impactful, with about three-quarters saying it was very or extremely important to their call to ministry (74%) and even more with regards to their faith formation (78%).

The clear and widespread impacts of Christian summer camp experiences do not stand on their own. They function as part of an incredibly complex matrix of life situations and other ministry experiences. Survey data make clear that ministry experiences build on one another. The more experiences a person had, the more likely they were to experience each of the other ministries included in the survey. Those who attended Sunday school with some frequency were much more likely to be confirmed and participate in a church youth group. Those with all three of these experiences were much more likely to attend the triennial ELCA Gathering, attend summer camp, and become involved with campus ministry in college, with each of these experiences making the others more likely and correlating with increased church involvement. The combination of these experiences revealed a series of dominant pathways to rostered ministry.

The most common pathway can be summarized as ELCA regulars (70% of respondents). This was the most direct path to rostered ministry, with a median age of 28 when rostered. These were people who grew up connected with the ELCA or its predecessor bodies and remained consistently involved in multiple ministries from childhood through adolescence. At no point did this group's church engagement drop below monthly involvement. Their stories were complex and varied, but they shared a consistent connection to Lutheran ministries, each of which impacted them to various degrees. Unsurprisingly, this group was the most likely to participate in specialized ministries like attending camp (72%), the ELCA Gathering (43%), and serving on summer camp staff (40%). They identified an average of 5 mentors (out of a list of 14) that they considered very or extremely important in their call to rostered ministry.

A second and closely related pathway was non-ELCA regulars (20% of respondents). This group included those who were consistently involved (at least monthly) in church ministries of Christian denominations other than the ELCA and its predecessor bodies. This group was much less likely to be involved with specialized ministries like attending camp (53%) and serving on summer camp staff (24%), further highlighting the importance of camping ministries to the ELCA. They identified an average of 4 of 14 mentors considered very

or extremely important in their call to rostered ministry, which generally came later in life than their colleagues who grew up in the ELCA (median age of 38 when rostered).

Together, these two pathways accounted for 90% of all respondents, indicating that the vast majority of rostered ministers in the ELCA have common experiences of consistent, regular church involvement from childhood through adulthood.

The remaining 10% of respondents had less consistent church involvement that followed one of four patterns. Engagers (3.5% of the total) had a pattern of little-to-no church involvement in their elementary school years followed by increasing involvement through middle and high school. Dis-engagers (3%) had the opposite pattern, with heavy involvement in elementary school followed by a sharp drop-off by their high school years. Inconsistents (1.5%) had no consistent involvement pattern, with some attending sporadically throughout their childhood and adolescence, while others indicated brief periods of heavier involvement, though almost never attending church or youth group more than monthly. The final pattern was the truly disengaged (2%), those who were never involved in church more than once or twice a year. Some of the disengaged grew up in nominally Christian households, while others were raised in different religions or were irreligious. These four groups had varying paths to rostered ministry and far less support than the ELCA regulars or non-ELCA regulars. Engagers identified an average of 3 of 14 mentors considered very or extremely important in their call to rostered ministry, while the remaining groups averaged only 2. Experiences like camp attendance, church retreats, mission trips, and attending the ELCA Gathering were uncommon, particularly among dis-engagers, inconsistents, and the disengaged.

Age, gender identity, sexual orientation, and race also played important roles in call narrative. The first women were ordained in the ELCA's predecessor bodies in 1970, and people in same-gender romantic relationships were officially prohibited from the roster until 2009. This history has had generational impacts on the roster. Only 29% of respondents over the age of 65 were female, compared with 48% of those 46-65 and 56% of those 45 years or younger. Of respondents who were rostered prior to 1980, only 5% were female, 2% identified as LGBTQIA, and 1% were people of color. Of those rostered since 2010, 61% were female, 9% identified as LGBTQIA, and 7% were people of color. These numbers show tremendous demographic shifts, from a roster dominated by straight, white males to one with increasing diversity. As of 2020, the oldest, most experienced cohort of pastors and deacons remained predominantly white, straight, and male.

Women and people who identified as LGBTQIA were significantly older, on average, when they were ordained, presumably because many were not officially allowed to be ordained when they were younger. These groups were also significantly more likely to be raised in a denomination other than the ELCA or its predecessor bodies (the non-ELCA regulars mentioned above). This suggests that many experienced a call to ministry through consistent involvement in a denomination that did not affirm their call because of their gender or sexual orientation. Correspondingly, the median age when rostered has risen steadily. While the median age when rostered has risen for all demographic groups, it has remained much lower for straight, white males. Just considering those rostered since the year 2000, the median age among straight, white males when rostered was 32, compared to 40 among all other ministers. It is reasonable to anticipate the median age decreasing as all demographic groups understand from an early age that their call to ministry is affirmed and encouraged.

All of these factors impacted camp involvement, as camp involvement also impacted call narrative. Those raised outside of the ELCA and predecessor bodies were significantly less likely to attend camp or work at camp. The proportion of newly rostered ministers who grew up as ELCA regulars has declined each decade

since the 1980s, comprising 81% of those rostered prior to 1980 and only 61% of those rostered since 2010. Therefore, fewer newly rostered ministers grew up attending and working at Christian summer camp (particularly LOM camps). However, Christian camp involvement also saw a general increase from the 1970s through the mid-2000s, when many Christian camps experienced peak enrollment. Therefore, those who grew up as ELCA regulars were more likely to attend camp and work at camp in the 1990s and 2000s than those who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s. These competing factors produce a complex dataset. The proportion of newly rostered ministers who attended LOM camp as children declined progressively from those rostered prior to 1980 (53%) to those rostered since 2010 (43%). However, this is not due to fewer people attending camp or less frequent impactful call experiences in the camp setting. On the contrary, both of these factors *increased*. Rostered ministers age 45 and younger were far more likely to report attending LOM camp (59%) than those age 46-64 (47%) and those age 65 and older (44%). Camp engagement was most frequent among rostered ministers age 45 and younger who grew up as ELCA regulars. Among this group, 71% attended LOM summer camp and 60% served on LOM summer camp staff. A remarkable 67% of this subgroup agreed that their camp experiences were instrumental in their call to rostered ministry.

We can explain these seemingly contradictory numbers by examining the demographics. Many of those rostered since 2010 were older (median age of 38 when rostered), and they were more likely than their predecessors to come from a tradition other than the ELCA and its predecessor bodies. Both of these factors made camp experiences less common among recently rostered ministers, even though camp was playing an increased roll in faith formation and call to ministry among young people, particularly those raised in the ELCA.

Considering the age of ministers when they were rostered is one way to assess the directness of their path to rostered ministry. While call stories are incredibly complex, there are several experiences associated with more direct paths to ministry. Using a series of regression analyses isolated four experiences that were predictive of ministers being rostered at a younger age, regardless of other factors like age when completing the survey, gender, race, and whether or not they were raised in the ELCA. These four factors were: participation in the ELCA Gathering at least once, serving on Christian summer camp staff at least once, attending an ELCA college/university, and increased involvement in college campus ministry (particularly those participating in worship or events more than monthly). A fifth factor was also isolated, though it was not independently important because it correlated so strongly with other ministries in the analysis. This factor was increased frequency of attending overnight Christian summer camp (particularly those who attended four or more times). If a respondent had at least one of these five experiences ($n=2391$), their median age when rostered in the ELCA was 29. If a respondent had none of these experiences ($n=536$), the median age they were rostered in the ELCA was 41.

These findings highlight the importance of three ministry areas on call to rostered ministry in the ELCA: camp, the Gathering, and campus ministry. Three things are notable about these ministry spaces. First, they are interconnected ministries. If a respondent had one of these experiences, they were likely to have at least one more (72% of those who had at least one of these experiences had more than one). The experiences were also connected to other ministries, such as congregational involvement. Those who attended camp more frequently, for example, tended to be more involved with their congregation in childhood and adolescence. Those who attended the Gathering were more likely to be involved with church youth group and attend worship services in their high school years. Second, most of these ministries are ELCA-specific ministries. Attending an ELCA college, working at a LOM camp, and attending the ELCA Gathering are all experiences that emphasize ELCA identity. This is in contrast to other ministries included in the survey, such as mission/service trips, church

retreats, and VBS. Third, most of these were young adult ministries, indicating the importance of experiences in this stage of life to vocation and call.

Of all the ministry areas included in the survey, serving on summer camp staff stood out as the most consistently impactful to faith formation and call to ministry. As noted above, it was one of the five key factors that had significant, independent impacts on being rostered at a younger age. It was also consistently identified as “very” or “extremely important” to both faith formation (78%) and call to ministry (74%).

Serving as a Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM) was the only experience in the survey identified more consistently as very or extremely important to faith formation (90%) and call to ministry (86%). However, fewer than 2% of all respondents participated in YAGM, compared with over a third serving on summer camp staff. It is notable that nearly three-quarters (72%) of YAGM participants also served on summer camp staff. Furthermore, only the youngest respondents had the potential of serving in YAGM (over two-thirds were 45 or younger), while respondents of all ages served on summer camp staff, better showing the comparative impact over time.

In addition to these ministries, Sunday school deserves special mention, since it was the ministry experience that was most widespread among all respondents, with 94% attending monthly or more in their elementary years, including 85% attending weekly. Respondents consistently identified childhood experiences in the congregation (including Sunday school and VBS) as very or extremely important to both faith formation (73%) and call to ministry (54%). Because the experiences were so ubiquitous, childhood experiences in the congregation were highly impactful to the largest percentage of all respondents. We can conclude that childhood experiences in the congregation had the most widespread impacts on faith formation and call to ministry, YAGM was the most individually impactful experience (though on a small scale), and serving on summer camp staff was the most consistently impactful.

In addition to call story and faith formation, the survey measured connections and attitudes toward camping ministries. Some viewed their local camp as an indispensable partner in ministry, while others were ambivalent or even hostile to their local camp or to camping ministry, in general. Respondents were grouped into three categories of camp engagement. Camp enthusiasts were the most supportive of camping ministries, representing 39% of respondents. Camp accommodators (43%) acknowledged the importance of camping ministries but showed less support than the enthusiasts. Camp skeptics (18%) were generally ambivalent or overtly critical of camping ministries. The findings from the survey offer insight into why rostered ministers fall into these different categories and how camps and congregations might strengthen their partnerships.

These findings make clear that camping ministries play an integral role in faith formation and call to ministry in the ELCA. Camps and congregations remain strongly connected in partnerships that enhance the ministry of both spaces.

Part 1: Demographic Summary

The demographic distribution of the survey sample largely mirrored the demographic makeup of all ELCA rostered ministers. Sample distribution according to race and region of the country was almost identical to actual numbers. Female rostered ministers responded at a higher rate than male ministers, introducing a small sample bias according to gender. While female ministers accounted for just 33% of all rostered ministers in the ELCA in 2020, they made up 42% of the sample. Also notable is that currently serving rostered ministers responded at a much higher rate than retired ministers. While retired ministers comprised nearly half of the roster in 2020 (48%), they accounted for only a third of respondents (33%). Importantly, retired ministers were much more likely to be male compared with currently serving ministers. It is apparent, therefore, that the shortfall in the dataset had more to do with age than with gender. Older rostered ministers, especially those who were retired, were less likely to respond to the survey. Because retired ministers of the ELCA were mostly male (74%), the shortfall in retired minister responses helps to explain the gender imbalance in the sample.

Because of this discrepancy, most numbers in this report will be divided by age or separated by retired and currently serving ministers.

Rostered Minister Role:

62% of respondents were ordained pastors with an active call

- ⇒ 39% Solo pastor serving in congregation
- ⇒ 15% Pastor serving in congregation with multiple pastors (about half of these were lead pastors)
- ⇒ 5% Ordained pastor serving in non-congregational ministry
- ⇒ 3% Bishop or assistant to the bishop

5% of respondents were deacons with an active call

- ⇒ 3% Deacon serving in a congregation
- ⇒ 2% Deacon serving in non-congregational ministry

33% of respondents were rostered ministers on leave from call or retired

Note on Retirement:

- 48.3% of the entire roster was retired in 2020, and 2.7% was on leave from call (total 51%)
- Only 33% of survey respondents were retired or on leave from call

Respondent Gender:

- 57% male
- 42% female (actual in ELCA: 33%)
- 1% gender non-conforming or other
- Of survey respondents, almost 50% of currently serving rostered ministers were female (49.6%), compared with only 26% of retired ministers

LGBTQIA+

- 5% of respondents identified as LGBTQIA+
- This included 6% of all currently serving rostered ministers and less than 2% of retired ministers

Race:

96% White/Caucasian (actual in ELCA: 95.1%)

1% Black/African-American

1% Hispanic/Latinx

1% Mixed race

1% Other (Asian, Native American, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander)

- Less than 2% of retired ministers were people of color, compared with more than 5% of those currently serving.

Table 1: Regional Distribution of Survey Respondents Compared with Actual Distribution in 2020

ELCA Region	Survey	Actual
Region 1	7.8%	7.4%
Region 2	9.2%	9.3%
Region 3	19.2%	18.2%
Region 4	9.1%	8.2%
Region 5	17.5%	17.1%
Region 6	8.1%	9.2%
Region 7	9.7%	10.9%
Region 8	9.5%	8.9%
Region 9	9.8%	10.7%

Figure 1: Respondent Distribution, by ELCA Region (n=3028)

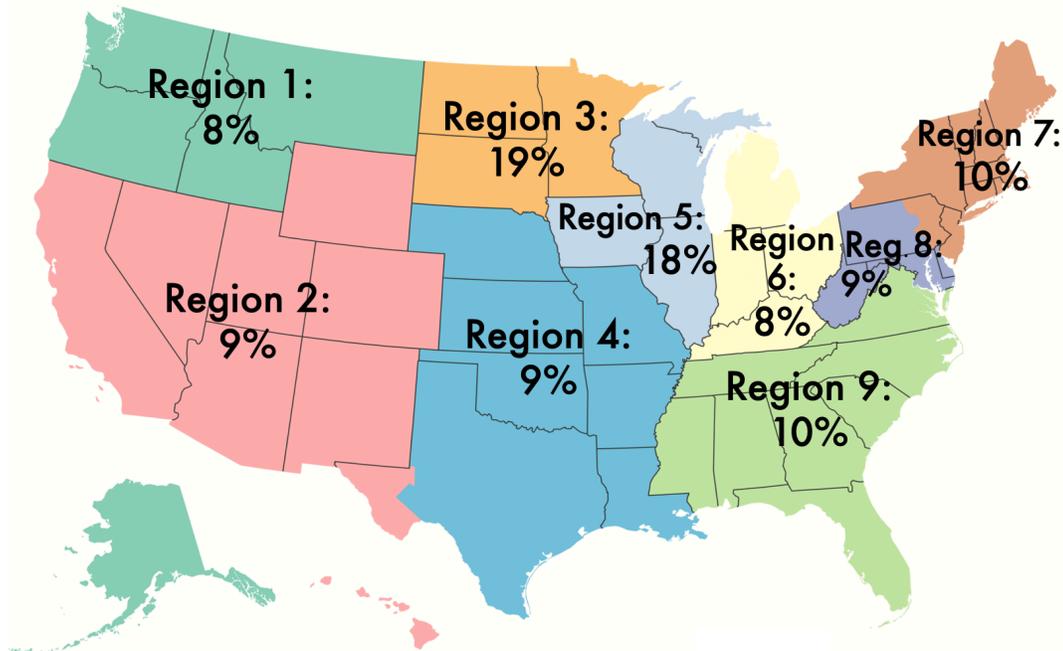
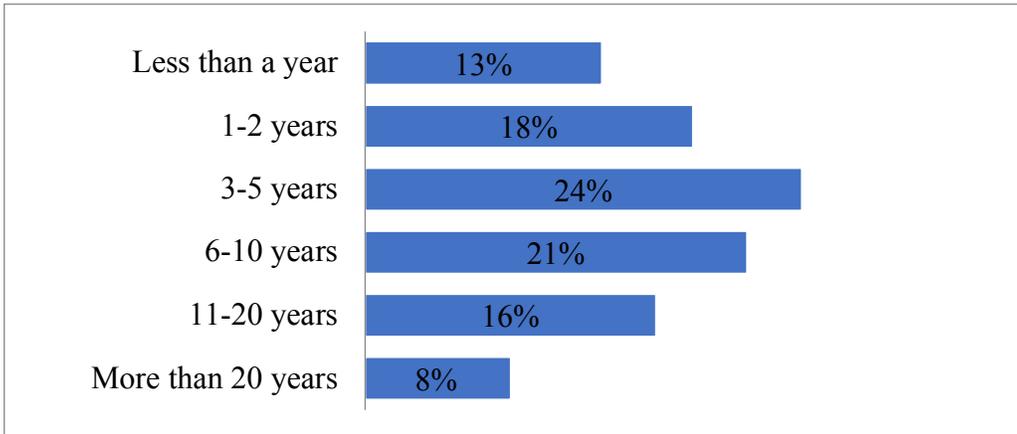


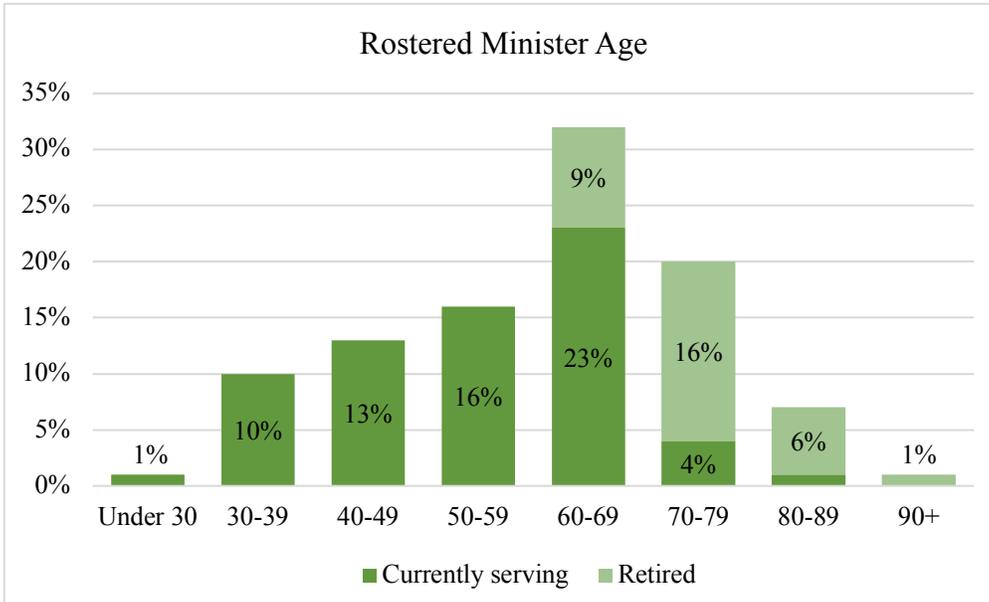
Figure 2: Respondent Tenure in Current Call/Position, n=2779



Age:

- In ELCA, 57.9% of all rostered ministers were over the age of 65
- In the survey, 41.1% of respondents were over 65
- Average age, all responding ministers: 60
- Average age of responding ministers currently serving: 54

Figure 3: Respondent Age, n=3005



Ordination/Consecration:

Almost half (49%) of respondents were ordained or consecrated at age 29 or younger. Another quarter (25.5%) were rostered in their 30s, and the remaining quarter (25.5%) were rostered at 40+ (including 12% over 50). The median age of ordination/consecration was 30, and the average was 34.5.

Table 2: Changing Demographics by Respondent Age

	Age 45 and under <i>n=566</i>	Age 46-65 <i>n=1203</i>	Over 65 <i>n=1236</i>
Average year of roster	2012	1999	1981
Median age when rostered	29	32	28
% Retired	0%	8%	72%
% Female	56%	48%	29%
% LGBTQIA+	11%	5%	2%
% People of Color	4%	5%	3%
Attended an ELCA college	41%	38%	49%
Attended LOM camp as child/youth	59%	47%	44%
Served on LOM summer staff	53%	30%	21%

Table 3: A Changing ELCA Roster: Demographics by Year Respondent was Rostered

	Rostered prior to 1980 <i>n=650</i>	Rostered 1980-1999 <i>n=1061</i>	Rostered 2000-2009 <i>n=562</i>	Rostered 2010-2020 <i>n=721</i>
Median age at ordination/consecration	26	30	38	37
Median age at time of survey	75	63	53	42
% Retired	86%	29%	13%	4%
% Female	5%	41%	61%	61%
% LGBTQIA+	2%	3%	5%	9%
% People of Color	1%	3%	5%	7%
Attended an ELCA college	59%	38%	30%	27%
Attended any Christian camp	69%	63%	67%	62%
Attended LOM camp as child/youth	53%	48%	49%	43%
Served on LOM summer staff	30%	31%	32%	36%
ELCA regular (<i>see below</i>)	81%	71%	65%	61%

- Those rostered more recently were much more likely to be rostered later in life, female, people of color, and identify as LGBTQIA+.

Part 2: Involvement with Lutheran Outdoor Ministries

Figure 4: Respondent Involvement at LOM Camps, n=3029

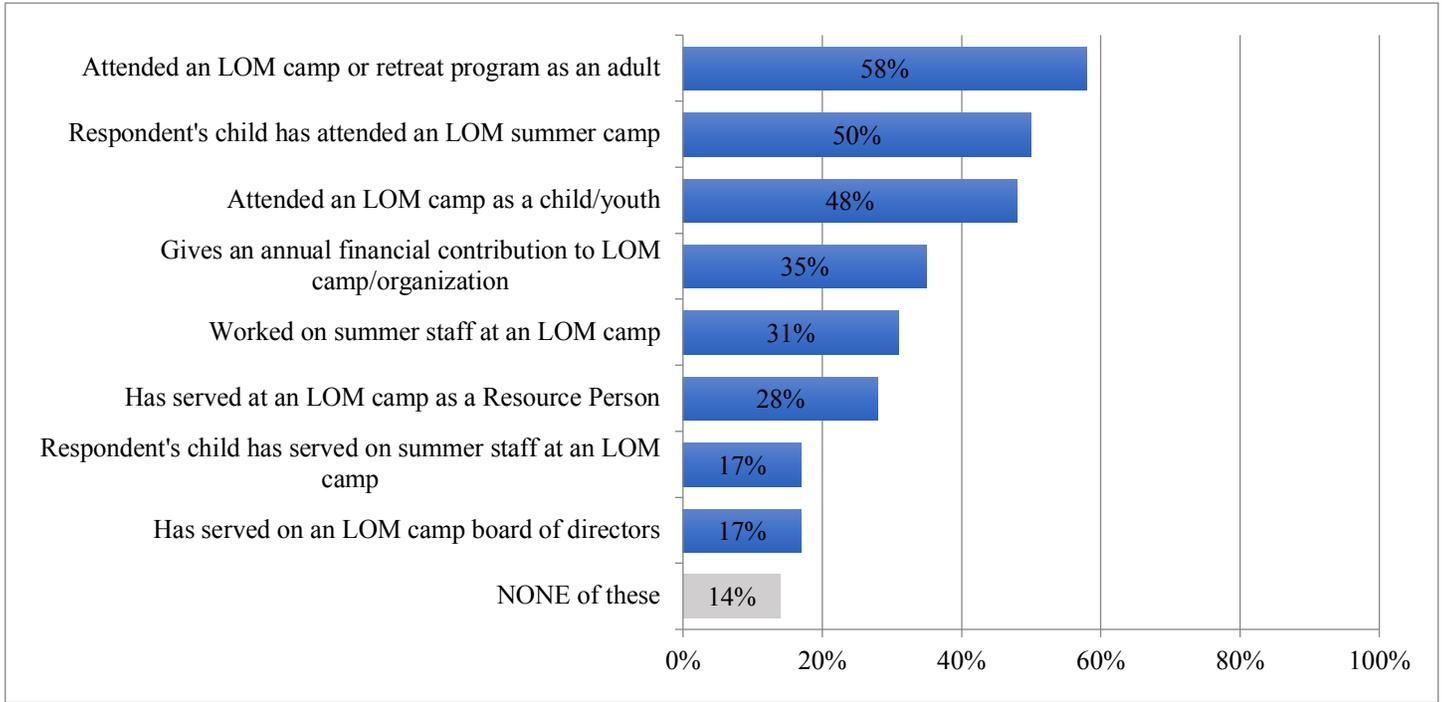


Table 4: Involvement at LOM Camps, by Respondent Age

	45 and under <i>n=564</i>	46-65 <i>n=1202</i>	Over 65 <i>n=1229</i>	All <i>N=2995</i>
Attended a LOM camp or retreat program as an adult	56%	63%	55%	58%
Respondent's child has attended a LOM summer camp	28%	57%	52%	50%
Attended a LOM camp as a child/youth	59%	47%	44%	48%
Gives an annual financial contribution to LOM camp/organization	40%	38%	31%	35%
Worked on summer staff at a LOM camp	53%	30%	21%	31%
Has served at a LOM camp as a Resource Person	23%	29%	29%	28%
Has served on a LOM camp board of directors	12%	18%	19%	17%
Respondent's child has served on summer staff at a LOM camp	1%	22%	21%	17%
NONE of these	12%	12%	17%	14%

Figure 5: Respondent Proximity to Closest LOM Site (or one congregation supports most), n=2822

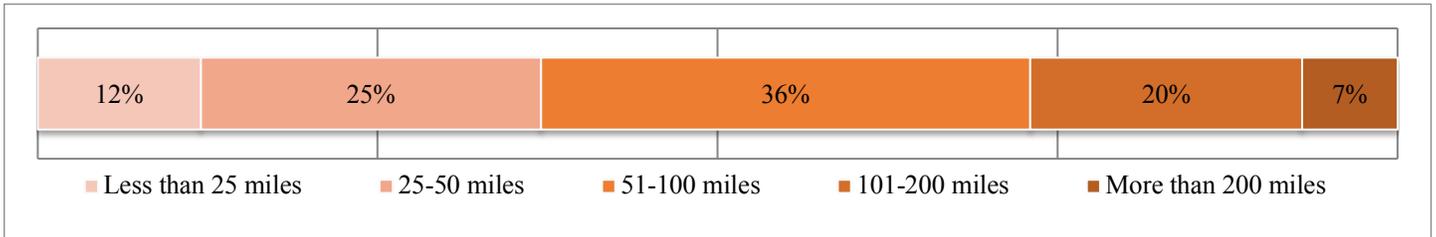


Figure 6: Frequency Respondent Visits LOM Site that Congregation Most Supports, n=2954

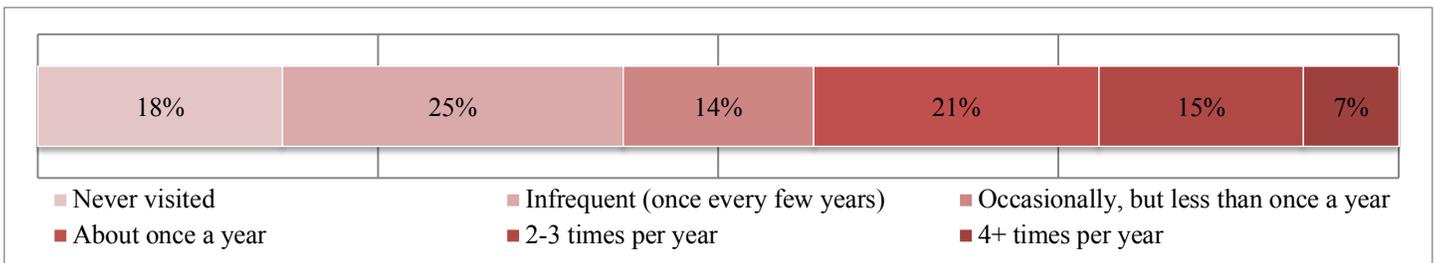


Figure 7: Current and Past Involvement of Respondent's Congregation with LOM, n=2898

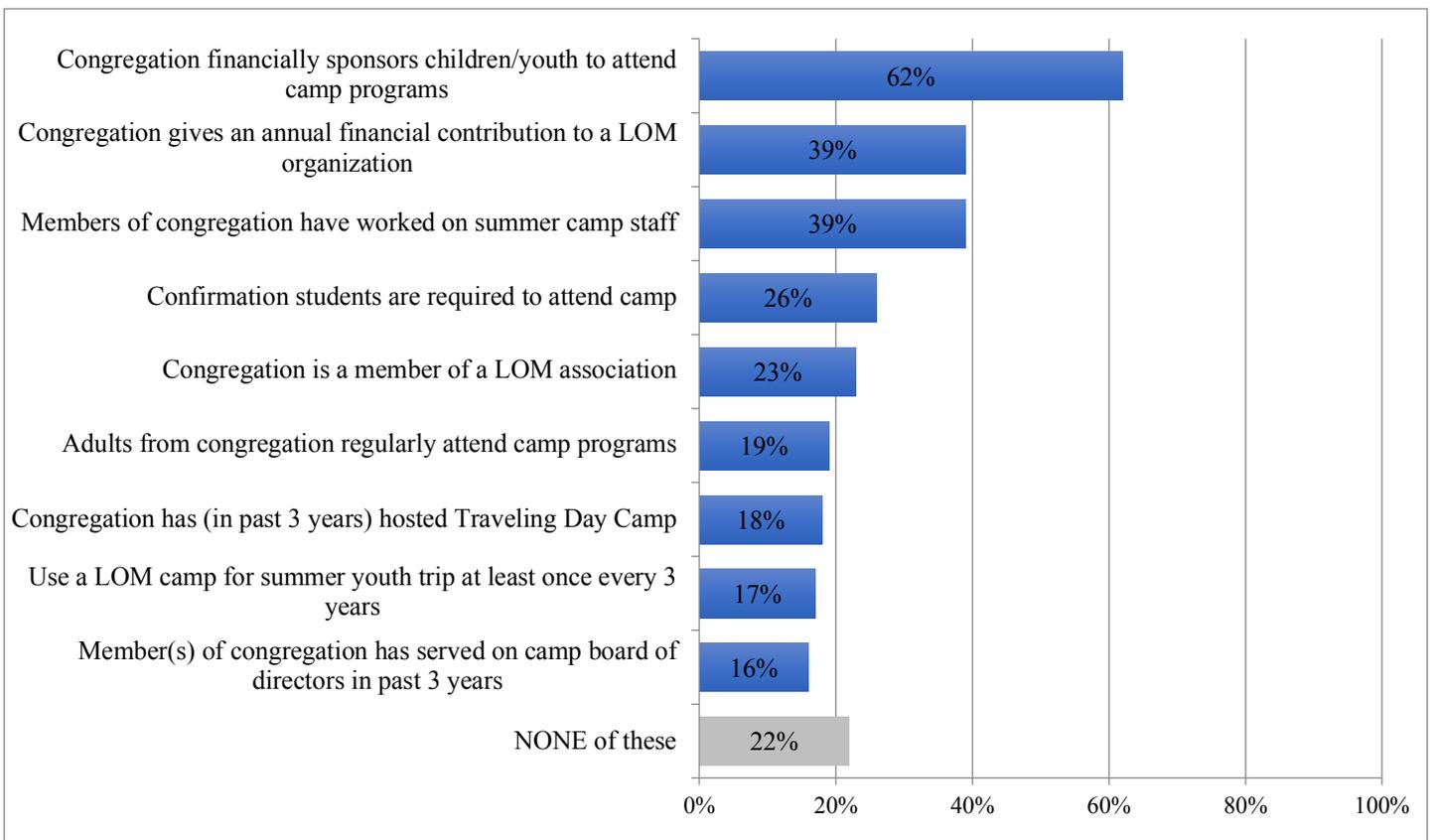
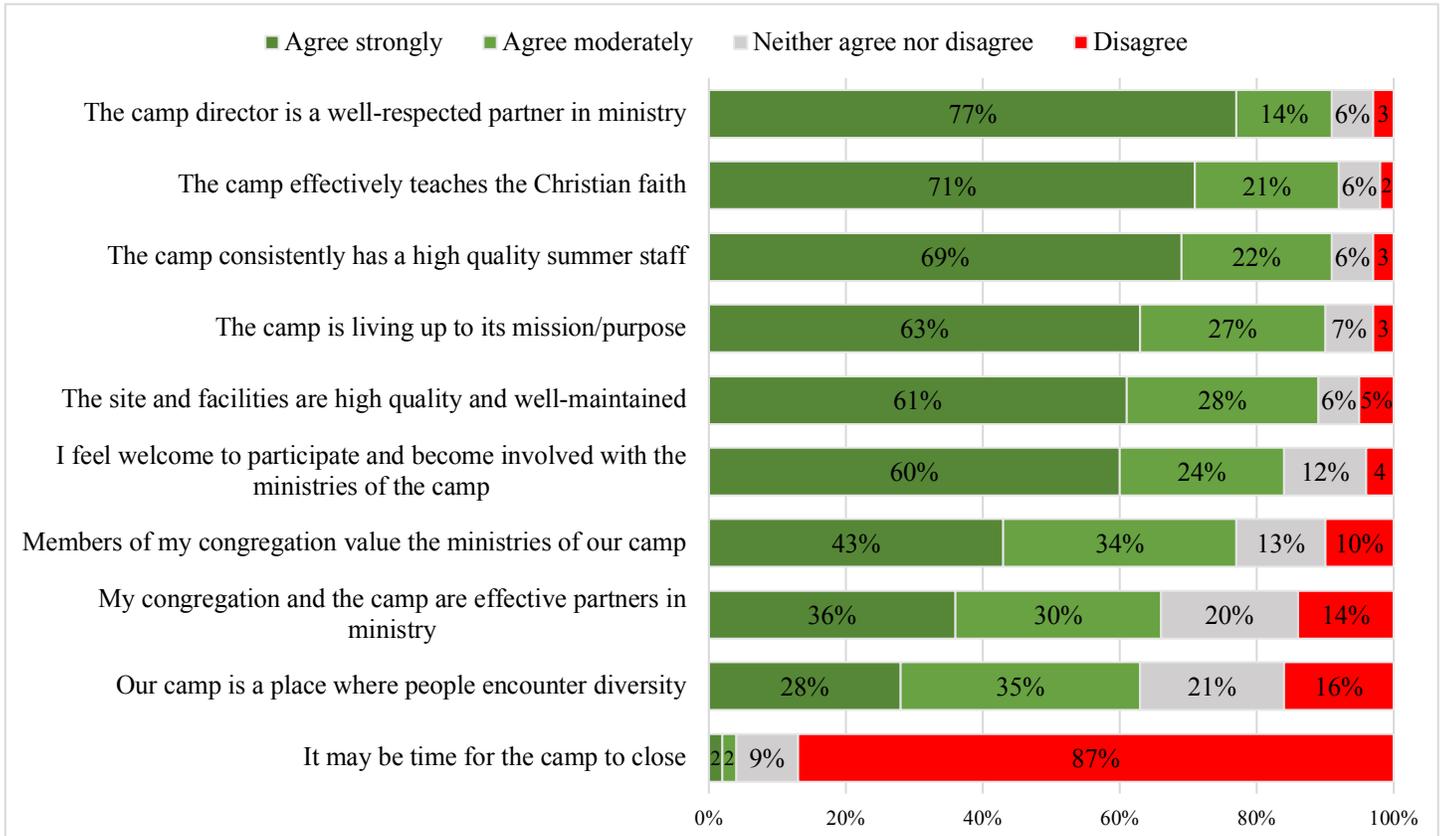


Table 5: Congregational Involvement with LOM, by Proximity and Respondent Experience

	Respondent served on LOM camp staff <i>n=929</i>	Respondent did not serve at LOM camp <i>n=1961</i>	Proximity 50 miles or less <i>n=1000</i>	Proximity over 100 miles <i>n=729</i>	All <i>N=2898</i>
Congregation financially sponsors children/youth to attend camp programs	72%	58%	67%	58%	62%
Members of congregation have worked on summer camp staff	56%	31%	45%	35%	39%
Congregation gives an annual financial contribution to a LOM organization	47%	36%	45%	32%	39%
Confirmation students are required to attend camp	29%	25%	28%	26%	26%
Congregation is a member of a LOM association	30%	20%	26%	17%	23%
Adults from congregation regularly attend camp programs	24%	17%	25%	15%	19%
Congregation has (within past 3 years) hosted Traveling Day Camp	25%	14%	19%	17%	18%
Use a LOM camp for summer youth trip at least once every 3 years	22%	14%	19%	15%	17%
Member(s) of congregation have served on camp board of directors in past 3 years	21%	13%	19%	14%	16%
NONE of the above	13%	26%	17%	26%	22%
Respondent visits the camp property at least once a year	55%	37%	54%	36%	43%

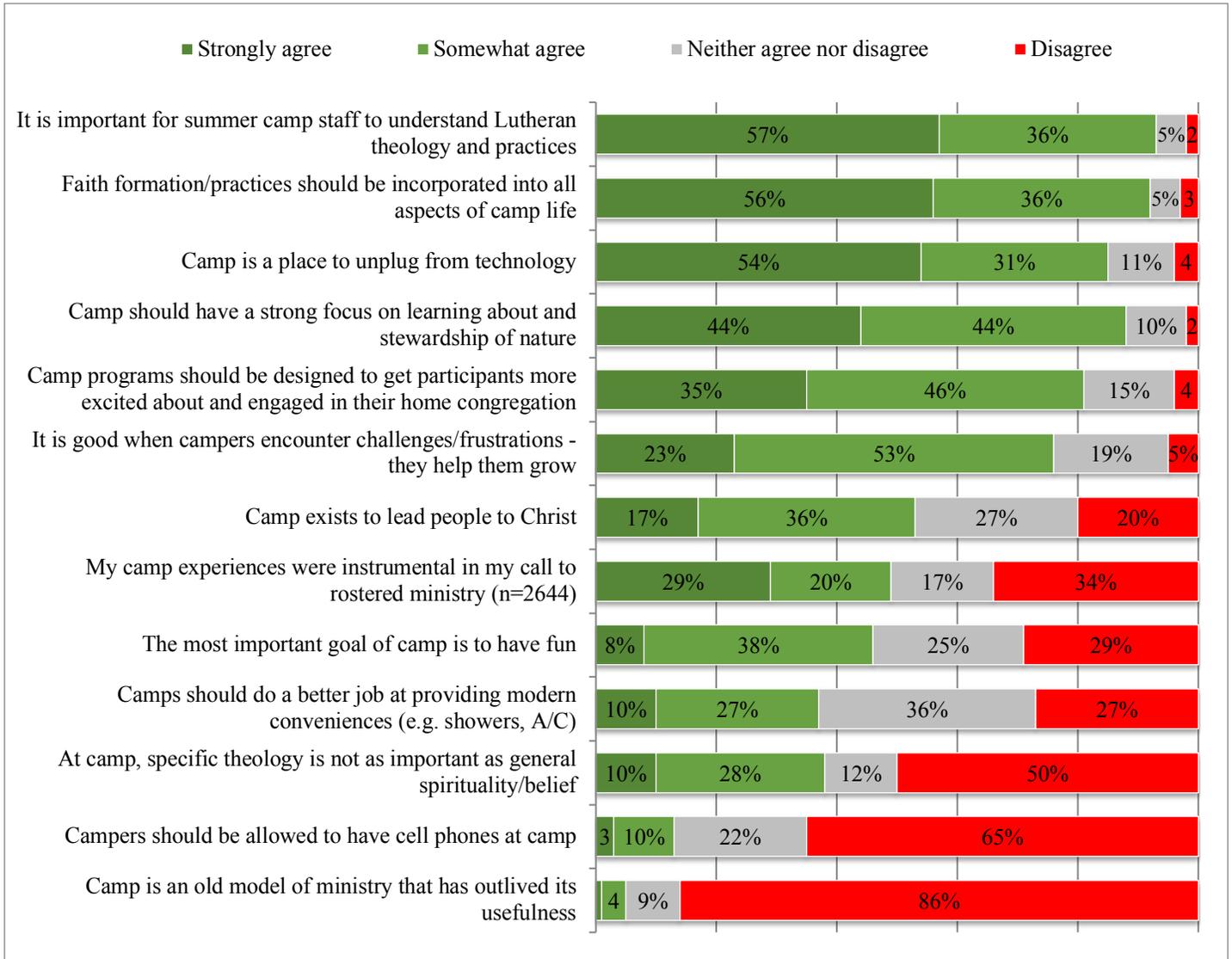
- The above table makes clear that both proximity and leader experiencing serving on camp staff were positively associated with increased congregational involvement with their local LOM ministry

Figure 8: Respondent Perceptions of LOM Ministry with which Congregation is Most Closely Associated, n=2447



- 9% of respondents indicated that they were unsure about every one of the above survey items, indicating a lack of familiarity with their local LOM ministry. Many of those who were unsure about their local LOM ministry were also relatively new to their call, an indication that they may not have had time to connect with and evaluate their local LOM ministry.

Figure 9: Respondent Agreement with Philosophy Statements about Camping Ministry, n=2918



Three Types of Camp Engagement:

Three measurements were combined to delineate categories of engagement with camping ministries. These included the level of agreement with the statement, “Camp is an old model of ministry that has outlived its usefulness,” involvement in camping ministries (measured primarily by assessing frequency of visiting the property), and personal giving to a LOM organization.

Camp Enthusiasts (39%): These rostered ministers were the most supportive of camping ministries. They recognized the importance of the camp model, participated in the ministries, and gave of their resources to support the ministries. On average, they visited a LOM camp more than once per year, and almost three-quarters (72%) gave an annual financial contribution. All enthusiasts disagreed (94% “disagree strongly”) with the statement that camp is an old model of ministry that has outlived its usefulness.

- **Described camp as:** Faithful, formative, vital, fun, ministry, and essential
- The most important predictive factor for a rostered minister being a camp enthusiast was the frequency they attended camp as a child (as attendance went up, being a camp enthusiast was more likely).

Camp Accommodators (43%): These rostered ministers were generally supportive of camping ministries, though most did not devote personal resources, and they tended to participate far less frequently than camp enthusiasts. Three-quarters (75%) visited their local camp less than once per year, and only 15% gave an annual financial contribution to one or more LOM organization.

- **Described camp as:** Faithful, fun, important, formation, experience, and ministry

Camp Skeptics (18%): These rostered ministers were generally ambivalent or overtly critical of camp ministries. The vast majority (85%) visited their local LOM camp only every few years or not at all, and 94% did not give to a LOM organization. Over a quarter (27%) agreed that camp is an old model of ministry that has outlived its usefulness, and almost another half (46%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

- **Described camp as:** Good, experience, faithful, ministry, great, and fun

Table 6: Involvement with LOM, by Camp Engagement Category

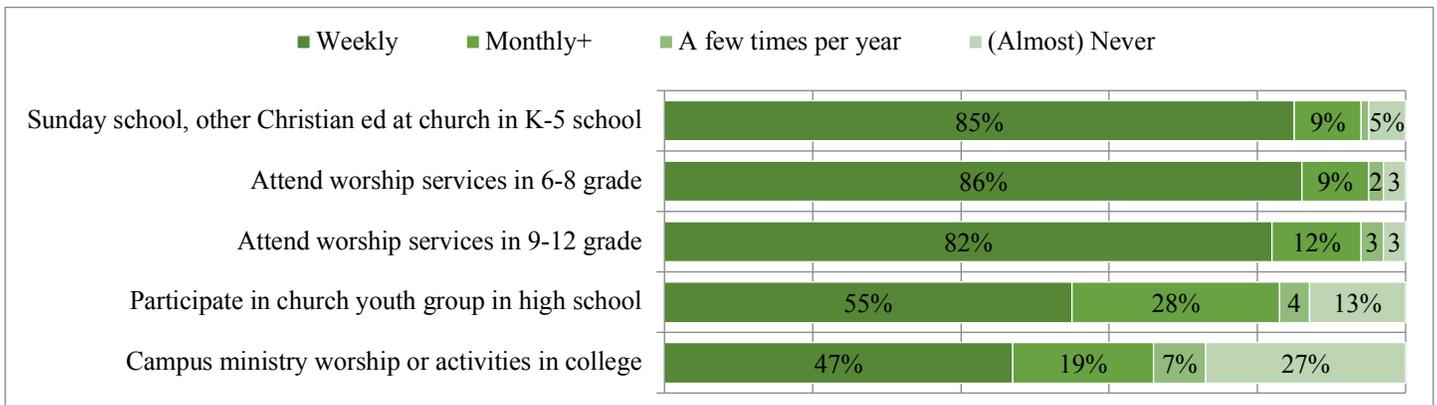
	Enthusiasts <i>n=1169</i>	Accommodators <i>n=1293</i>	Skeptics <i>n=523</i>	All <i>N=2985</i>
Attended a LOM camp or retreat program as an adult	76%	54%	31%	58%
Child has attended LOM summer camp	66%	45%	27%	50%
Attended a LOM camp as a child/youth	61%	44%	29%	48%
Gives an annual financial contribution to LOM camp/organization	72%	15%	6%	36%
Worked on summer staff at LOM camp	47%	26%	15%	32%
Has served at a LOM camp as a Resource Person	46%	18%	11%	28%
Has served on a LOM board of directors	31%	9%	7%	17%
Respondent's child has served on summer staff at an LOM camp	28%	13%	6%	18%
Visits local camp at least once per year	78%	25%	9%	43%

Part 3: Respondent Faith Engagement through Young Adulthood

Respondent Engagement with Lutheran Church prior to adulthood (n=3005):

- 65% “I was born and raised an ELCA Lutheran (or predecessor body)”
- 14% Raised in a non-Lutheran Christian denomination
- 10% Raised in a Lutheran tradition other than the ELCA (or predecessor body)
- 6% Family became engaged with an ELCA congregation partway through childhood
- 2% Blended congregational upbringing, including ELCA Lutheran and other denomination(s)
- 2% Non-Christian home growing up
- 1% Other

Figure 10: Frequency of Participation in Religious Activities as Child/Youth (n=2994)



Confirmation (n=3000):

- 92% were confirmed prior to adulthood
- 1% participated in confirmation program but were not confirmed
- 7% did not participate in a confirmation program

Figure 11: Frequency of Participation in Specialized Christian Activities as Child or Youth (n=2973)

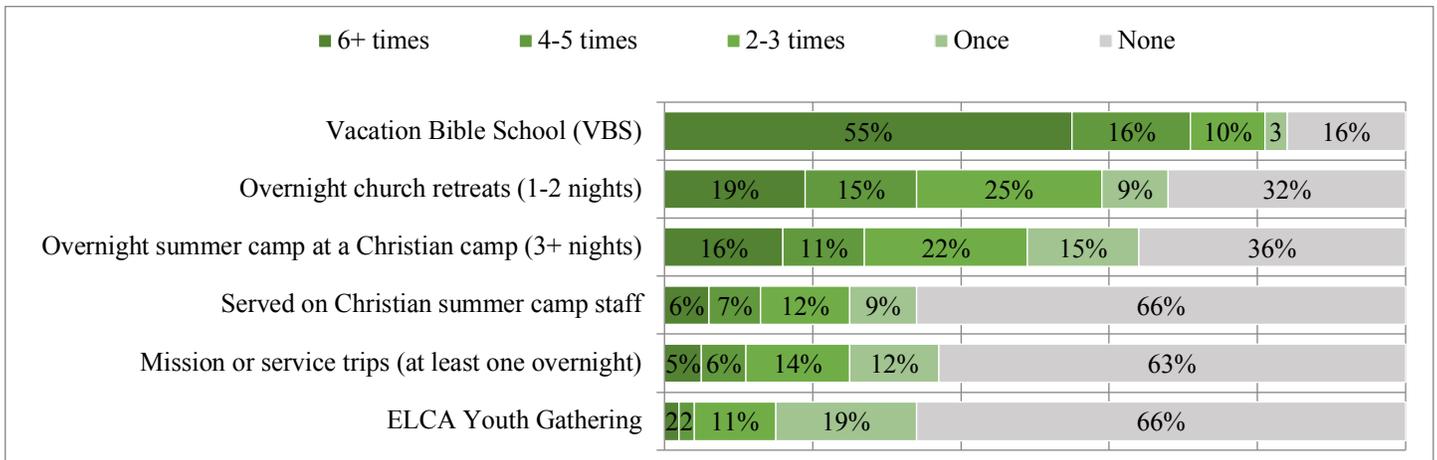


Table 7: Respondent Participation in Religious Activities as Child/Youth, by Age Categories

	45 and under <i>n=556</i>	46-65 <i>n=1191</i>	Over 65 <i>n=1217</i>	All <i>N=2964</i>
Attended Sunday school or other Christian ed at church in K-5 school monthly or more	93%	93%	94%	94%
Attended worship services in 6-8 grade monthly or more	95%	94%	96%	95%
Attended worship services in 9-12 grade monthly or more	96%	93%	95%	94%
Participated in church youth group in high school monthly or more	83%	79%	87%	83%
Attended campus ministry worship or activities in college monthly or more	78%	63%	64%	63%
Was confirmed prior to adulthood	94%	91%	93%	92%
Vacation Bible school at least once	88%	84%	83%	84%
Overnight church retreats (1-2 nights)	85%	73%	56%	68%
Overnight summer camp at a Christian camp (3+ nights)	73%	62%	62%	64%
Served on Christian summer camp staff	55%	33%	27%	34%
Mission or service trips (at least one overnight)	68%	35%	24%	37%
Attended ELCA Gathering	49%	27%	34%	34%

Table 8: Percentage of Respondents that have Participated in Various Service Opportunities

	45 and under <i>n=559</i>	46-65 <i>n=1186</i>	Over 65 <i>n=1202</i>	All <i>N=2983</i>
Lutheran Youth Encounter	3.1%	6.9%	6.7%	6.6%
Served in the U.S. Armed Forces	2%	5.5%	9.7%	6.6%
U.S. Peace Corps, Americorps, or other non-Lutheran service organization	7.8%	2.8%	2.9%	3.8%
Lutheran Volunteer Corps	6.3%	2.3%	1.1%	2.6%
Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)	6.3%	0.7%	0.8%	1.8%
At least one of the above	23.8%	16.8%	19.4%	19.3%

Summary of childhood faith engagement:

90% of respondents were **church regulars**, engaged in church worship/activities at least monthly throughout elementary, middle, and high school. Another 8% were partially or inconsistently engaged. Only 2% were **religiously disengaged**, never engaging in church worship/activities more than a few times per year at any point in their childhood or youth.

- **Church regulars (90%)**
 - **ELCA regulars (63% of total)**: this group was born and raised in the ELCA or predecessor body and was active in congregational life throughout their childhood and youth
 - **Non-ELCA regulars (20% of total)**: this group was born and raised in a tradition other than the ELCA and was active in congregational life throughout their childhood and youth
 - **Combo regulars (7% of total)**: this group had a shared denominational tradition in their childhood and youth, regular at times in ELCA and other times in non-ELCA traditions
- **Inconsistently engaged (8%)**
 - **Engagers (3.5% of total)**: this group was not highly engaged in congregational life during elementary school but became highly engaged by their high school years
 - **Dis-engagers (3% of total)**: this group was highly engaged in congregational life during elementary school but became less engaged or disengaged by their high school years
 - **Inconsistent (1.5% of total)**: this group showed no regular pattern of engagement, though they were engaged at some level during part or most of their childhood and youth
- **Disengaged (2%)**: These respondents were not engaged in congregational life during grade school. Some grew up in non-Christian homes. They may have been engaged in another religion. They may have attended congregational services or activities occasionally at points in their life, though never more than once or twice a year.

Table 9: Childhood Faith Engagement, by Respondent Age Category

	45 and under <i>n=559</i>	46-65 <i>n=1194</i>	Over 65 <i>n=1221</i>	All <i>N=2974</i>
ELCA Regulars	68%	63%	61%	63%
Non-ELCA Regulars	13%	21%	22%	20%
Combo Regulars	9%	5%	7%	7%
All Regulars	90%	89%	90%	90%
Engagers	5%	3%	3.5%	3.5%
Dis-engagers	2%	3%	2.5%	3%
Inconsistent	1%	2%	2%	1.5%
Disengaged (none or non-Christian)	2%	3%	1%	2%

Table 10: Faith Formation Summary

	ELCA Regulars or Combo Regulars n=2106	Non- ELCA Regulars n=600	Engagers n=108	Dis- engagers or Inconsistent n=127	Disengaged n=65
Median age when rostered	28	38	29	41	40
% Female	39%	50%	46%	57%	42%
% categorize as “Camp Enthusiasts”	44%	29%	30%	30%	25%
Attended Sunday school or other Christian ed at church in K-5 school monthly or more	99.9%	99.7%	4%	81%	5%
Attended worship services in 6-8 grade monthly or more	99.6%	99%	63%	68%	5%
Attended worship services in 9-12 grade monthly or more	100%	100%	98%	16%	11%
Participated in church youth group in high school monthly or more	90%	81%	79%	11%	6%
Attended campus ministry worship or activities in college monthly or more	71%	64%	62%	28%	24%
Was confirmed prior to adulthood	99.2%	85%	81%	69%	9%
Vacation Bible school at least once	92%	76%	54%	57%	28%
Overnight church retreats (1-2 nights)	74%	64%	63%	35%	12%
Overnight summer camp at a Christian camp (3+ nights)	72%	53%	43%	28%	17%
Served on Christian summer camp staff	40%	24%	25%	14%	8%
Mission or service trips (at least one overnight)	40%	35%	35%	15%	9%
Attended ELCA Gathering	43%	12%	29%	7%	5%
Lutheran Youth Encounter	8%	5%	6%	2%	1%
Served in the U.S. Armed Forces	6%	6%	8%	7%	14%
U.S. Peace Corps, Americorps, or other non-Lutheran service organization	4%	5%	1%	4%	3%
Lutheran Volunteer Corps	3%	2%	4%	2%	0%
Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)	2%	1%	0%	1%	3%
Average number of mentors (of 14) considered very/extremely important to call	5	4	3	2	2
% with at least one family member very or extremely important to call	78%	68%	37%	43%	26%

- The above table makes clear that ELCA Regulars had the most direct route to rostered ministry, with multiple opportunities for faith engagement throughout childhood and adolescence. They identified many more faith mentors who were influential in directing their call to ministry and were ordained or consecrated much younger than the other groups.

Part 4: Perceived Impact of Ministry Experiences on Faith and Call

Impact of Congregational Ministries

Almost all respondents had significant faith experiences in their childhood and youth. Nine out of ten respondents indicated they attended worship, Sunday school, and confirmation monthly or more throughout elementary, middle, and high school. Conversely, only 2% of respondents had little-to-no faith experiences in the congregational setting in their childhood and youth. The remaining 8% had inconsistent congregational involvement, typically with either a period of disengagement in high school (about 3% of total) or little-to-no involvement in elementary school Christian education programs before engaging consistently in middle school and beyond (about 4% of total).

Figure 12: Impact of Childhood Congregational Ministries on Faith Formation

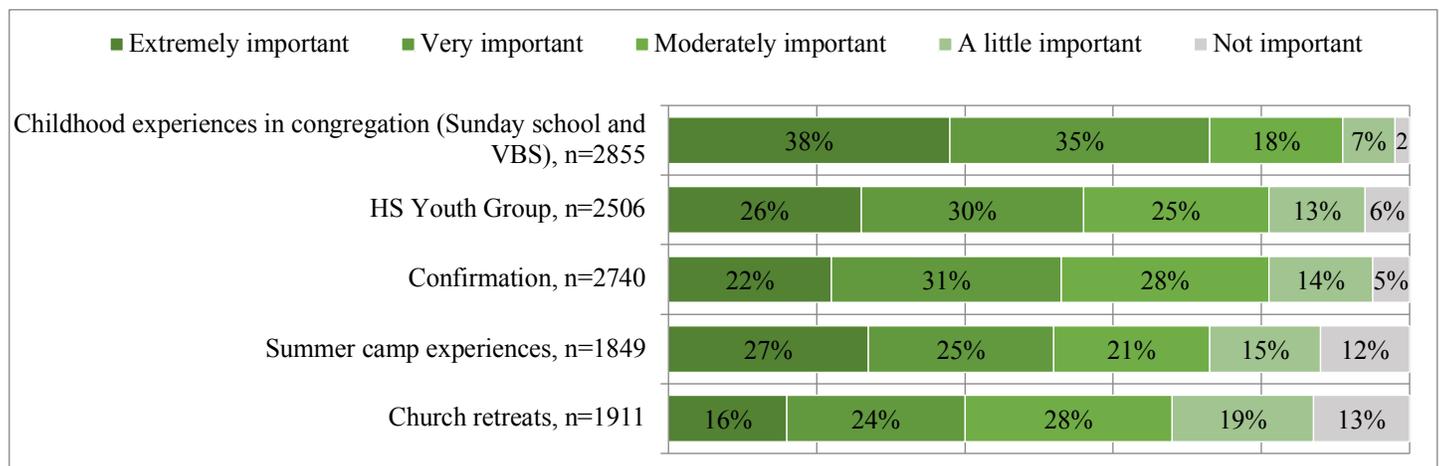
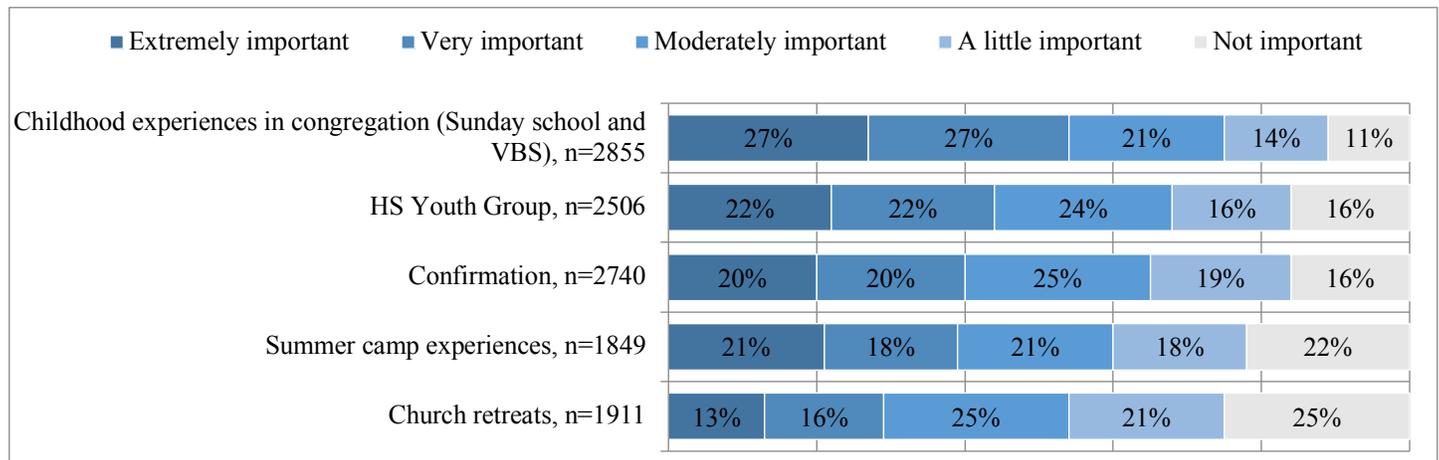


Figure 13: Impact of Childhood Congregational Experiences on Call to Ministry



- The most important faith influencer/mentor on call to rostered ministry was the pastor of home congregation. Almost two-thirds (63%) of respondents indicated that a pastor of their home congregation was very or extremely important in their call to rostered ministry, slightly edging out mother (61%).

- Other congregational mentors were also important. Of those participating in the respective congregational programming as children: 36% indicated a youth ministry leader, 34% a Sunday school teacher, and 24% a confirmation mentor as very or extremely important for their call to ministry.
- 73% of all respondents indicated that at least one of the four listed congregational mentors were very or extremely important in their call to ministry, and 39% indicated more than one.
- When considering only those who were congregational regulars (monthly or more) throughout their childhood and youth, 75% indicated at least one congregational mentor as very or extremely important.
- Taken together, the single most important factor identified in the survey for faith formation and call to ministry was childhood experiences in the congregation, including Sunday school and VBS

Specialized Ministry Opportunities:

The survey sought to examine the role of short-term, specialized ministry opportunities on the faith formation and call of rostered ministers. These specialized ministries included summer camp, church retreats, mission/service trips, the ELCA Gathering, and serving on summer camp staff. Each of these experiences was quite common among respondents, though much less ubiquitous than congregational experiences like Sunday school and confirmation. Furthermore, these experiences were temporary and specialized, whereas core congregational programs like Sunday school, confirmation, and worship were available to the vast majority of respondents and took place over the course of many months and years. Between a third and two-thirds of respondents participated in each of these ministries at least once. With the exception of the Gathering, which takes place only once every three years, repeat experiences were more common than a single experience.

Figure 14: Impact of Specialized Ministry Opportunities on Faith Formation

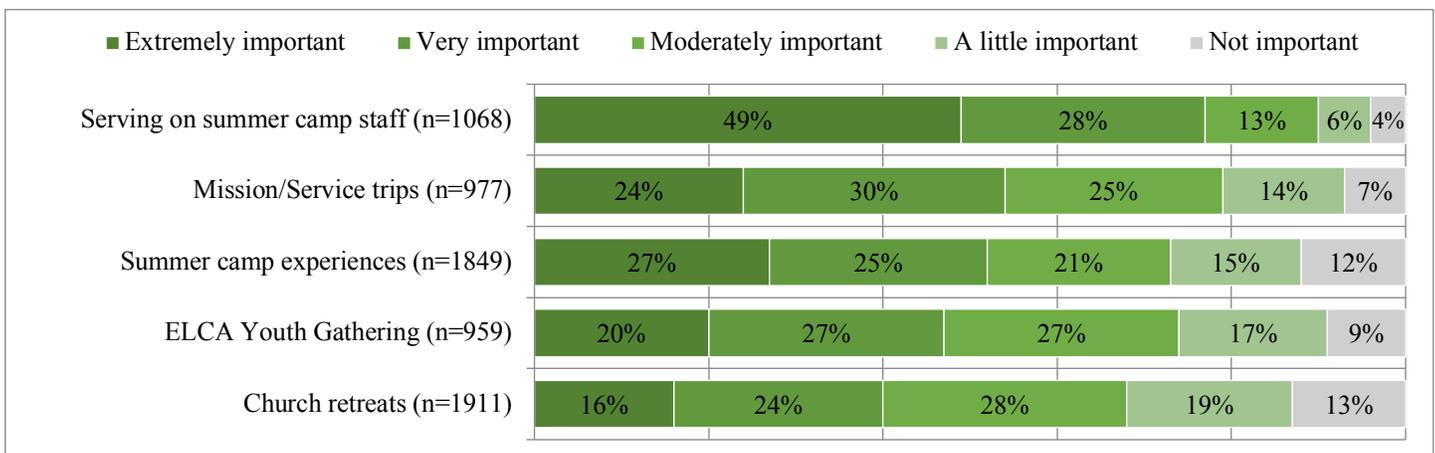
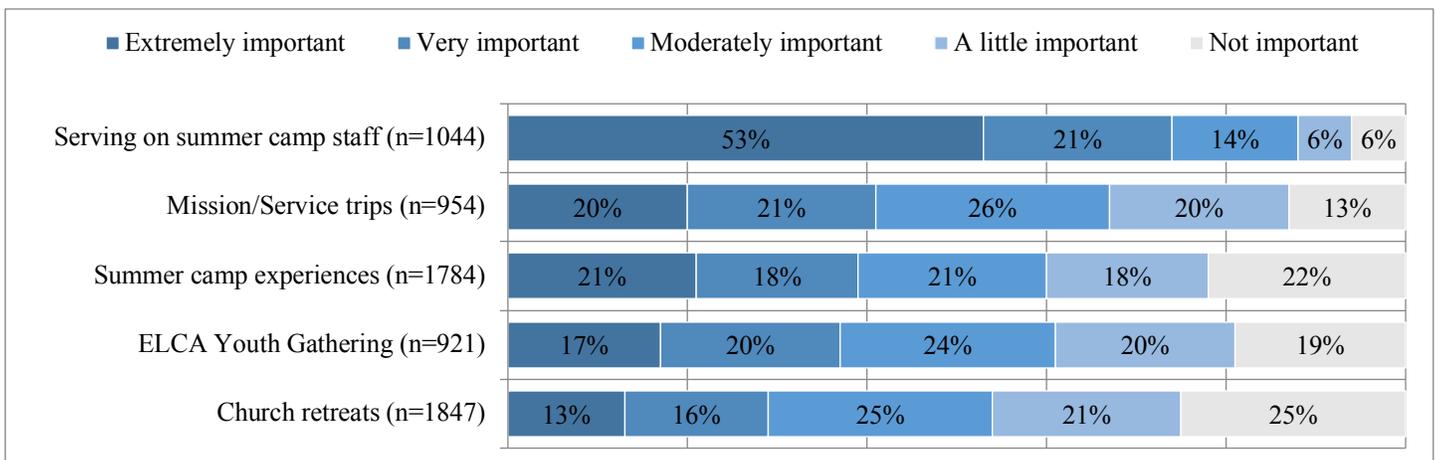


Figure 15: Impact of Specialized Ministry Experiences on Call to Ministry



- Serving on summer camp staff was the most consistently important ministry experience to both faith formation and call of the specialized ministries in the survey. It was also considered more important by those who experienced it than all of the congregational ministries in the survey.
- Mission/service trips, summer camp experiences, and the ELCA Gathering were given approximately equal importance, on average, in the survey. They were all considered more important than retreats.

Service Opportunities

The survey included 5 service opportunities commonly available among ELCA young adults. Three of these (LYE, YAGM, and LVC) were ELCA-sponsored service opportunities. The other two were non-Lutheran service opportunities, including military service. These experiences were far less common than others examined in the survey, with none including more than 7% of all respondents. Considering all five of the service opportunities, only a quarter (24%) of all respondents had participated in at least one of them. The scope of their potential impact, therefore, was much more limited than camp experiences, mission trips, and the Gathering. However, these were all year-long or multi-year experiences, making their potential impact on the individuals with access to them much greater.

Figure 16: Impact of Service Opportunities on Faith Formation

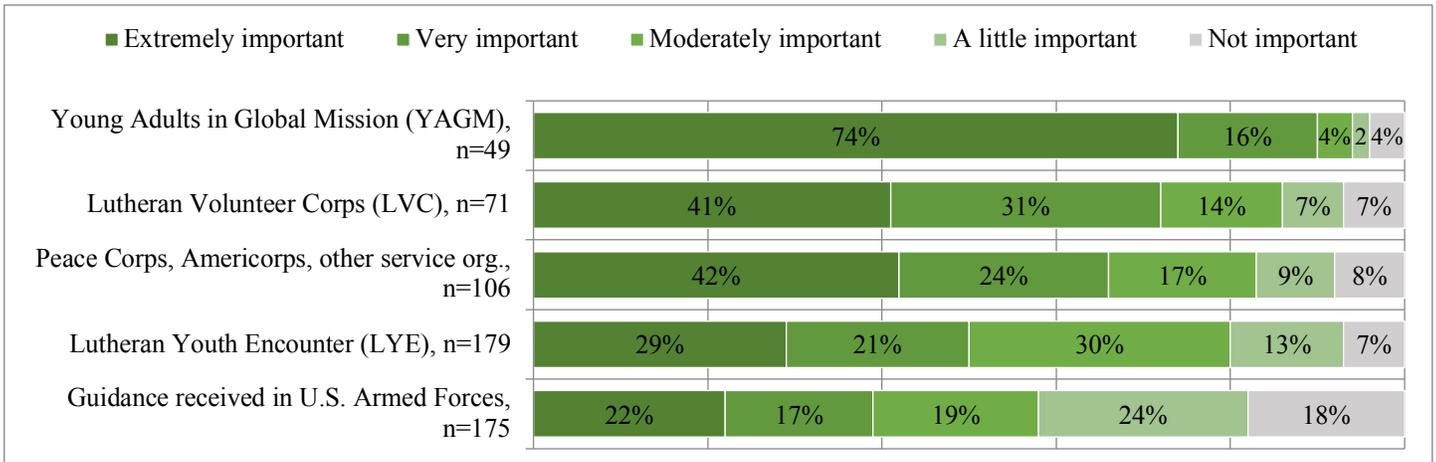
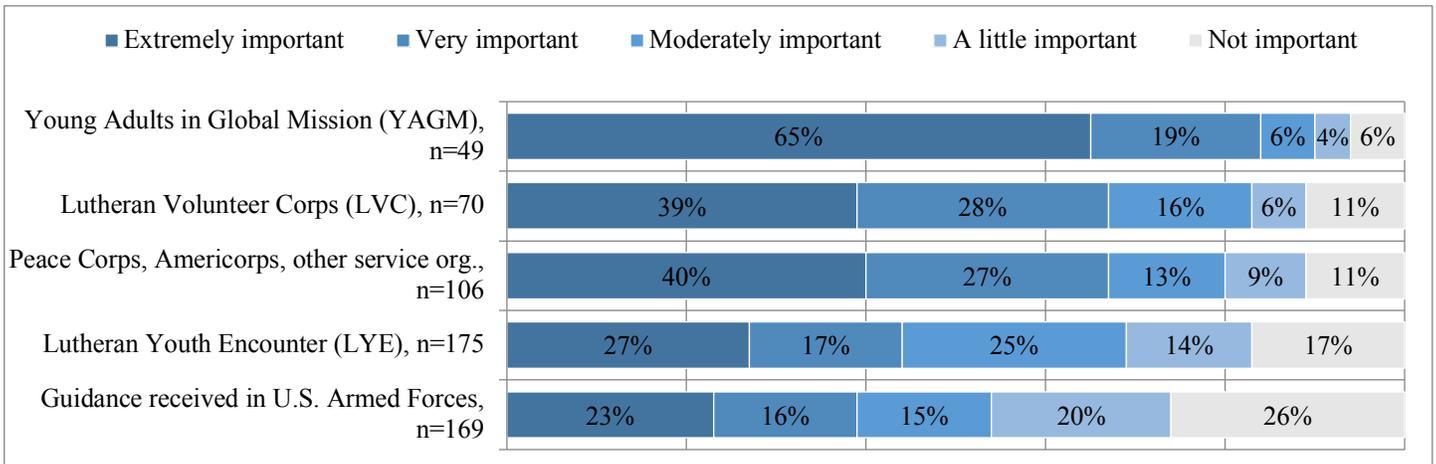


Figure 17: Impact of Service Opportunities on Call to Ministry



- Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) was considered among its participants as the most important experience to both faith formation and call to ministry in the entire survey, the only one considered more important than serving on summer camp staff. However, it is important to note that only 49 respondents participated in YAGM, limiting its influence. Furthermore, most of these respondents were age 45 and younger.

College Experiences

- 38% attended an ELCA college/university
- 33% attended a state-sponsored college/university
- 22% attended a non-ELCA private college/university
- 5% attended both an ELCA college/university and a non-ELCA college/university

ELCA College Attendees

- 43% of all respondents attended an ELCA college, including 5% that also attended a non-ELCA school
- Two-thirds of ELCA college attendees (66%) indicated that they participated in campus ministry monthly or more during their time in school

Figure 18: ELCA College Attendee Involvement in Campus Ministry (n=1285)

Level	Freq.	Percent
Leadership team, heavily involved	337	26%
Regularly involved (weekly/almost weekly)	346	27%
Frequently involved (at least monthly)	162	13%
Occasionally/inconsistently involved	202	16%
Not involved (or almost never)	238	18%

- Evangelical campus ministry participation was comparatively rare at Lutheran colleges. Only 8% of respondents who attended Lutheran colleges participated in Campus Crusade for Christ or other Evangelical campus ministry at least once per month, and 83% never or almost never participated.

Figure 19: Impact of College Ministries on Faith Formation, Lutheran College Attendees, n=1249

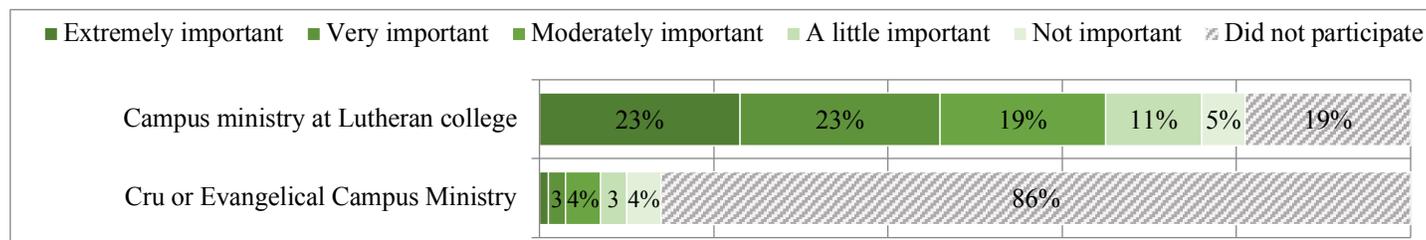
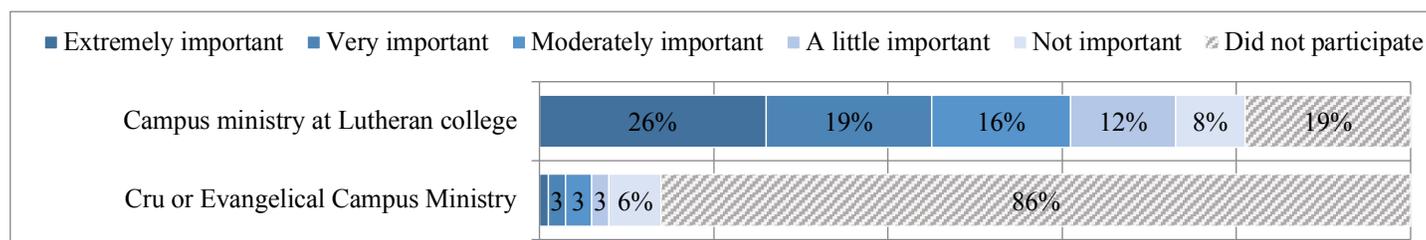


Figure 20: Impact of College Ministries on Call to Ministry, Lutheran College Attendees, n=1222



- The above figures show all Lutheran college attendees, including those who did not participate in campus ministry. If we consider only those who participated in the ministries monthly or more, 68% indicated it was very or extremely important for their personal faith formation, and 64% indicated it was very or extremely important for their call to ministry.

Table 11: Lutheran College/University Attendees

College Name	Number attended	% of respondents
Concordia College (MN)	129	10%
St. Olaf (MN)	110	9%
Luther College (IA)	107	8%
Augustana University (SD)	87	7%
Wartburg College (IA)	78	6%
Augsburg (MN)	72	6%
Capital University (OH)	68	5%
Pacific Lutheran University (WA)	62	5%
Gustavus Adolphus College (MN)	59	5%
Augustana College (IL)	49	4%
Wittenberg University (OH)	47	4%
Texas Lutheran (TX)	40	3%
Lenoir-Rhyne University (NC)	39	3%
LCMS Concordia colleges	31	2%
Gettysburg (PA)	30	2%
Carthage College (WI)	29	2%
Muhlenberg (PA)	28	2%
California Lutheran (CA)	27	2%
Thiel College (PA)	26	2%
Newberry (SC)	26	2%
Midland (NE)	21	2%
Dana College (NE)	21	2%
Susquehanna (PA)	20	2%
Valparaiso (IN)	18	1%
Waldorf College (IA)	15	1%
Bethany College (KS)	12	1%
Roanoke College (VA)	12	1%
Wagner College (NY)	11	1%
Upsala College (NJ)	7	1%
Others	10	1%

Non-Lutheran College Attendees

Lutheran Campus Ministry, known in 2020 as LuMin, had a network of campus ministries at state-sponsored universities and non-Lutheran private colleges across the country. 18% of respondents indicated that Lutheran Campus Ministry was not available at the college or university they attended. Of the remainder, more than half indicated that they were not involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry. Those that were frequently involved indicated high levels of impact on both faith formation and call to ministry.

Figure 21: Non-ELCA College Attendee Participation in Lutheran Campus Ministry (or LuMin) (n=1427)

Level	Freq.	Percent
Leadership team, heavily involved	288	20%
Regularly involved (weekly/almost weekly)	172	12%
Frequently involved (at least monthly)	73	5%
Occasionally/inconsistently involved	126	9%
Not involved (or almost never)	767	54%

- Similar to Lutheran college attendees, respondents who attended non-ELCA colleges and universities were unlikely to participate in Campus Crusade for Christ or other Evangelical campus ministry, with 79% indicating that they were not involved or unaware of the groups’ activities. Some (13%) were involved monthly or more, higher than the proportion among Lutheran college attendees (8%).

Figure 22: Impact of College Ministries on Faith Formation, Non-Lutheran College Attendees, n=1342

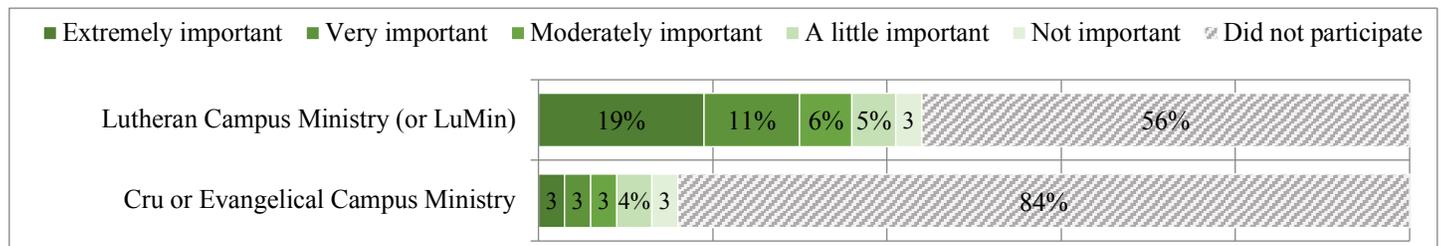
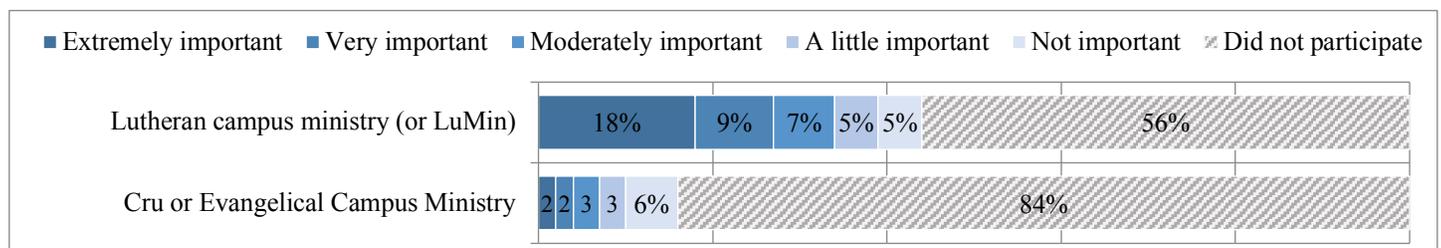


Figure 23: Impact of College Ministries on Call to Ministry, Non-Lutheran College Attendees, n=1330



- The above figures show all attendees at non-Lutheran college, including those who did not participate in campus ministry. If we consider only those who participated in Lutheran Campus Ministries monthly or more, 79% indicated it was very or extremely important for their personal faith formation, and 70% indicated it was very or extremely important for their call to ministry.

Table 12: Comparing Faith Experiences of those who Attended and did not Attend ELCA College

	Of those who attended ELCA College	Of those who did not attend ELCA college
Attended overnight Christian summer camp as child	76%	57%
Attended overnight camp at LOM camp as child	62%	39%
Was confirmed as child/youth	98%	88%
Attended ELCA Gathering	45%	26%
Worked on Christian summer camp staff	52%	33%
Worked on LOM summer camp staff	44%	24%
Participated in campus ministry worship or activities monthly or more	82%	55%

- Those who attended ELCA colleges tended to have more faith-forming experiences as children and youth. They were much more likely to have attended overnight camp, the ELCA Gathering, and work on summer camp staff. In their college years, they were also much more likely to participate in campus ministry.

Table 13: Faith Forming Experiences, in Comparison (N=2972)

	# with experience	% of total	% of participants very or extremely important	% of TOTAL N very or extremely important N=2972
Childhood experiences in congregation (e.g. Sunday school and VBS)	2855	96%	73%	71%
Confirmation	2740	92%	53%	49%
High School youth group	2506	84%	56%	47%
Church retreats	1911	64%	40%	25%
ELCA Gathering	959	32%	47%	15%
Summer camp experiences as child/youth	1849	62%	52%	32%
Serving on summer camp staff	1068	36%	78%	28%
Mission/Service trips	977	33%	54%	18%
Lutheran Campus Ministry (or LuMin)	593	20%	67%	13%
Campus Ministry at Lutheran college	1013	34%	57%	19%
<i>ALL Lutheran Campus Ministry</i>	1606	54%	61%	33%
Cru or Evangelical campus ministry	481	16%	36%	6%
Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)	49	2%	90%	1.5%
Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC)	71	2%	72%	1.7%
Lutheran Youth Encounter (LYE)	179	6%	50%	3%
Peace Corps, Americorps, other service org.	106	4%	66%	2%
U.S. Armed Forces, guidance received	175	6%	39%	2%

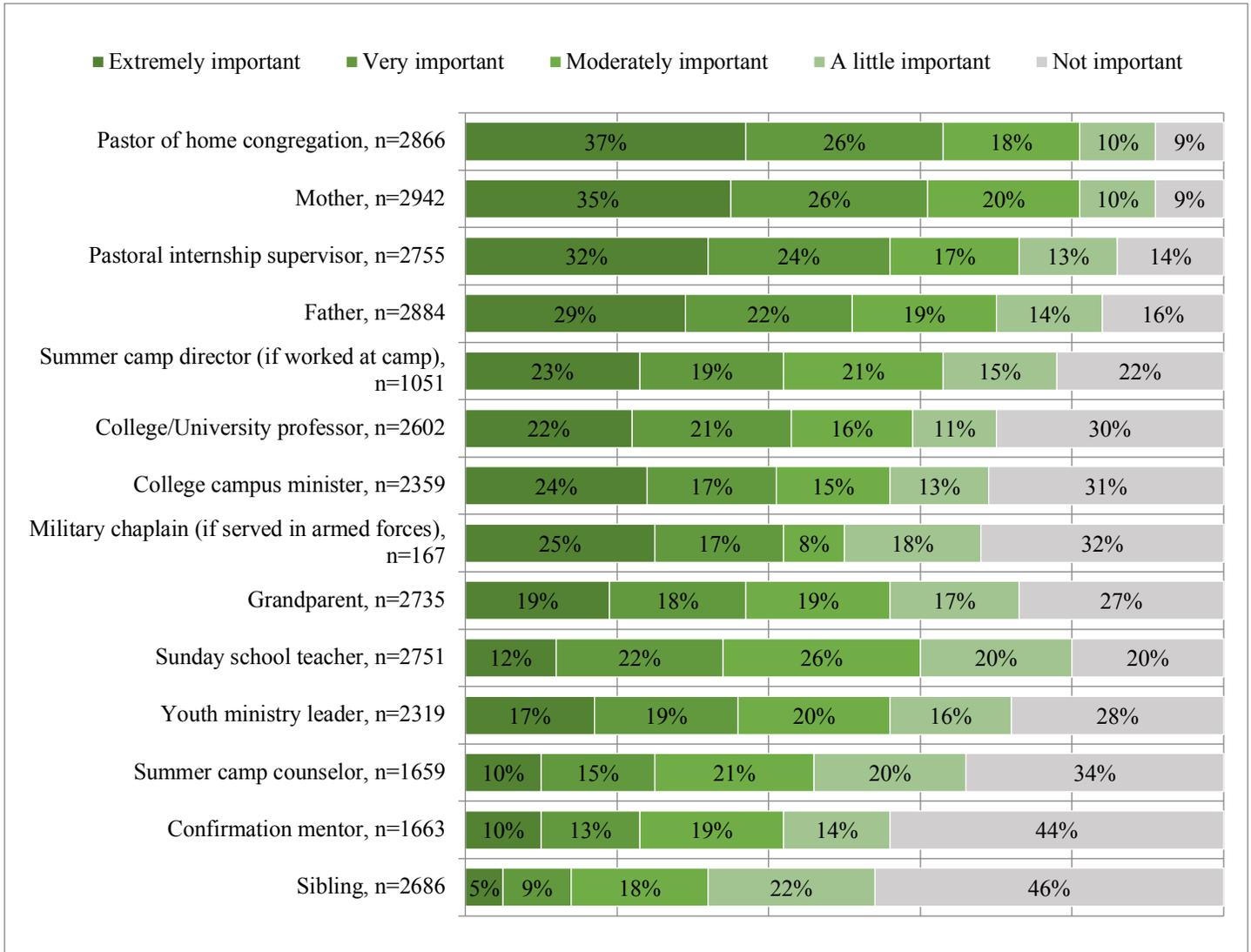
- Childhood experiences in the congregation, specifically Sunday school and VBS, were the most broadly impactful on respondent faith formation, being considered very or extremely important to 71% of all respondents. Nothing else in the survey exceeded 50% of all respondents, though confirmation and youth group came close.
- Even when considering only those who indicated having each specific experience, childhood experiences in the congregation remained near the top, with nearly three-quarters (73%) of those who participated in either Sunday school or VBS saying these experiences were very or extremely important to their faith formation. The only two ministry experiences that exceeded this consistency were YAGM (90%) and serving on summer camp staff (78%). Serving in LVC (72%) and participating in Lutheran Campus Ministry at a non-Lutheran college/university (67%) were close behind. Because these experiences were far less common, they each directly impacted far fewer respondents than Sunday school and VBS.

Table 14: Call to Ministry Experiences, in Comparison (N=2972)

	#	% of total N	% of participants very or extremely important	% of TOTAL N very or extremely important N=2972
Childhood experiences in congregation (e.g. Sunday school and VBS)	2702	91%	54%	49%
Confirmation	2612	88%	40%	35%
High School youth group	2392	80%	44%	36%
Church retreats	1847	62%	30%	18%
ELCA Gathering	921	31%	37%	12%
Summer camp experiences as child/youth	1784	60%	39%	23%
Serving on summer camp staff	1044	35%	74%	26%
Mission/Service trips	954	32%	41%	13%
Lutheran Campus Ministry (or LuMin)	581	20%	61%	12%
Campus Ministry at Lutheran college	986	33%	55%	18%
<i>ALL Lutheran Campus Ministry</i>	1567	53%	58%	30%
Cru or Evangelical campus ministry	472	16%	26%	4%
Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)	49	2%	86%	1.4%
Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC)	70	2%	67%	1.6%
Lutheran Youth Encounter (LYE)	175	6%	45%	3%
Peace Corps, Americorps, other service org.	106	4%	67%	2%
U.S. Armed Forces, guidance received	169	6%	39%	2%

- The single most important factor considered “very” or “extremely important” to call to ministry among all respondents was childhood experiences in their congregation, specifically Sunday school and VBS. This is partly due to the number of participants who were engaged in congregational ministries as children (91%), higher than any other ministry experience. However, it is notable that childhood experiences were more consistently impactful than any other congregational experience measured, including church retreats, confirmation, and youth group. Even among those most involved in high school youth group (those participating more than monthly, n=1884), only 51% considered it very or extremely important to their call to ministry, compared with 54% who participated in Sunday school or VBS.
- Young adult ministries were the only ones consistently more important than Sunday school in call to ministry. In order of most consistently impactful, these were YAGM (86%), serving on summer camp staff (74%), serving in LVC (67%), and participating in Lutheran campus ministry (58%).

Figure 24: Perceived Importance of Faith Influencers/Mentors on Call to Ministry



Part 5: Impacts of Working on Summer Camp Staff

Out of all respondents, 40% reported serving on Christian summer camp staff in some capacity. About three-quarters (78%) of those who worked on camp staff reported serving at a LOM camp. The remainder presumably worked at Christian camps that were not affiliated with LOM.

Figure 25: Proportion of Respondents who Served on LOM or Other Christian Summer Camp Staff (n=3,039)

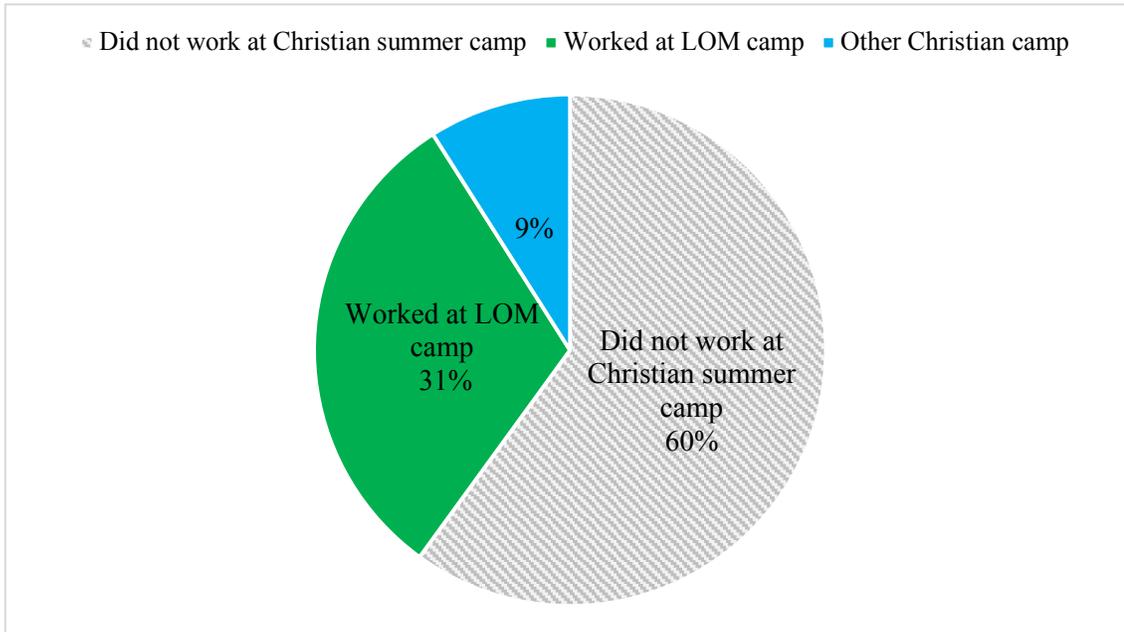


Figure 26: Respondent Perceptions of Impacts of Working on Summer Camp Staff (n=948)

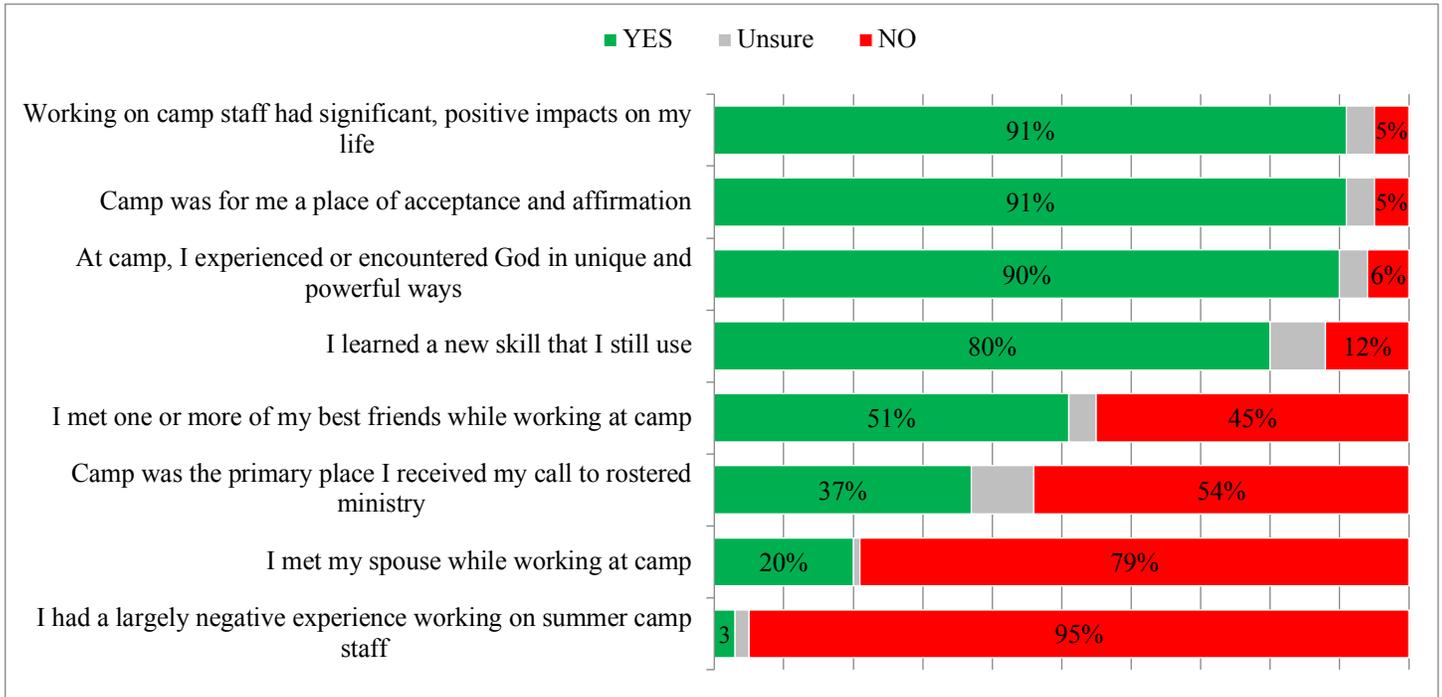


Figure 27: Comparing LOM and non-LOM Camp Experiences' Impact on Faith Formation and Call to Ministry

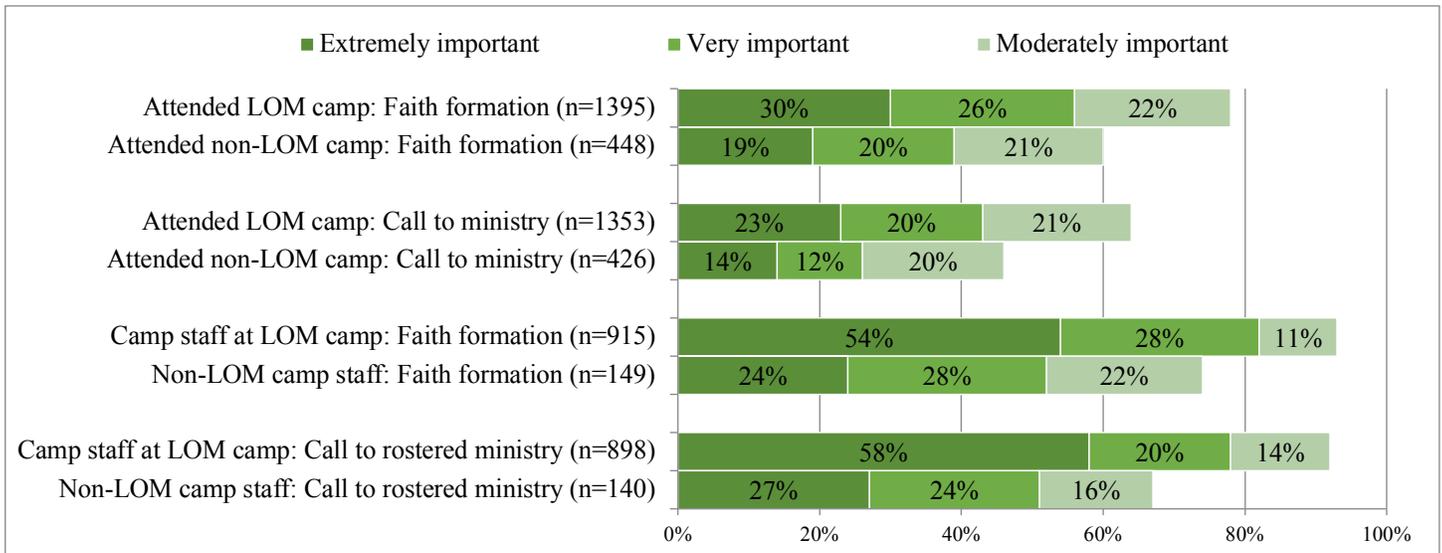


Table 15: Perceptions of Summer Camp for those who Served on Summer Camp Staff

Reported numbers are average agreement levels on a 5-point scale, with 1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=somewhat agree, and 5=strongly agree.

	LOM Summer Staff	Non-LOM Summer Staff	Did not work at camp	All Respondents
The camp consistently has a high quality summer staff (n=2259)	4.58	4.56	4.56	4.57 =
The camp director is a well-respected partner in ministry (n=2302)	4.68	4.63	4.63	4.65 =
The site and facilities are high quality and well-maintained (n=2417)	4.45	4.47	4.43	4.44 =
The camp effectively teaches the Christian faith (n=2355)	4.65	4.58	4.59	4.61 =
My congregation and the camp are effective partners in ministry (n=2369)	4.00***	3.79	3.74	3.83
Members of my congregation value the ministries of our camp (n=2392)	4.16**	4.09	4.02	4.07
I feel welcome to participate and become involved with the ministries of the camp (n=2447)	4.48**	4.36	4.33	4.38
Our camp is a place where people encounter diversity (n=2132)	3.68	3.86	3.70	3.71 =
The camp is living up to its mission/purpose (n=2314)	4.54*	4.51	4.46	4.49
It may be time for the camp to close (n=2396)	1.32	1.52**	1.44**	1.41
Camp is a place to unplug from technology (n=2828)	4.41**	4.25	4.32	4.34
The most important goal of camp is to have fun (n=2880)	3.12	3.27	3.21*	3.18
At camp, specific theology is not as important as general spirituality/belief (n=2879)	2.71	3.00**	2.85**	2.82
Camp should have a strong focus on learning about and stewardship of nature (n=2918)	4.37***	4.24	4.23	4.28
Faith formation/practices should be incorporated into all aspects of camp life (n=2908)	4.44	4.52	4.45	4.45 =
Programs should be designed to get participants more excited about/engaged in their home congregation (n=2883)	4.07	4.07	4.14	4.11 =
Campers should be allowed to have cell phones at camp (n=2747)	1.89	2.37***	2.28***	2.16
It is important for summer camp staff to understand Lutheran theology and practices (n=2890)	4.42	4.39	4.51**	4.47
Camp exists to lead people to Christ (n=2842)	3.44	3.54	3.42	3.43 =
Camp should do a better job at providing modern conveniences (n=2746)	2.92	3.16**	3.24***	3.13
It is good when campers encounter challenges or frustrations at camp because these experiences help them grow (n=2866)	4.00**	3.89	3.88	3.92
Camp is an old model of ministry that has outlived its usefulness (n=2845)	1.32	1.52**	1.69***	1.56
My camp experiences were instrumental in my call to rostered ministry (n=2644)	4.27***	3.25**	2.55	3.20

- Items marked with an equal sign (=) in the right-hand column showed no significant differences among the three groups in ANOVA analysis. All those that have at least one value marked with an asterisk (*) showed significant differences. The value marked with an asterisk was significantly higher than one or more other values at the level of $p < .05$ (*), $p < .01$ (**), or $p < .001$ (***)).
- The first ten items in the table are related to perceptions and involvement with a specific local camp. It is notable that those who served on camp staff have statistically equivalent perceptions of the quality of their local camp compared with those who never served on camp staff. However, those who served on camp staff are significantly more likely to report engagement with the camp, including feeling personally welcome at camp, feeling a strong partnership between camp and congregation, and reporting that congregational members value the camp.
- In the general philosophy questions about camping ministry (lower 13 items in table), there are many clear differences between those who worked at camp and those who did not. There is a consistent difference among these groups in perceptions of camp's role in connecting participants to the outdoors and unplugging them from technology. Those who worked at camp agree significantly more, on average, that camp is a place to unplug from technology and that learning about nature should be a strong focus. Conversely, they agree much less that campers should be allowed to have cell phones and that camp should do a better job providing modern conveniences.
- Interestingly, those who worked at non-LOM summer camps were more similar in responses to their colleagues who never worked at camp than to those who worked at LOM summer camps.

Table 16: Faith Formation Summary of those who Served on Summer Camp Staff

	LOM Summer Staff <i>n=937</i>	Non-LOM Summer Staff <i>n=274</i>	Did not work at camp <i>n=1793</i>	All Respondents <i>N=3,004</i>
Median age when rostered	28	30	31	30
% Female	42%	39%	43%	42%
% White/Caucasian	97%	92%	96%	96%
% categorize as “Camp Enthusiasts”	57%	31%	31%	39%
Attended Sunday school or other Christian ed at church in K-5 school more than monthly	94%	96%	89%	94%
Attended worship services in 6-8 grade more than monthly	95%	95%	90%	92%
Attended worship services in 9-12 grade more than monthly	95%	94%	89%	91%
Participated in church youth group in high school more than monthly	76%	79%	63%	68%
Attended campus ministry worship or activities in college more than monthly	71%	67%	50%	58%
Was confirmed prior to adulthood	98%	89%	90%	93%
Vacation Bible school at least once	91%	87%	80%	84%
Overnight church retreats (1-2 nights)	83%	76%	60%	69%
Overnight summer camp at a Christian camp (3+ nights)	82%	81%	53%	64%
Mission or service trips (at least one overnight)	51%	54%	28%	37%
Attended ELCA Gathering	47%	40%	27%	34%
Lutheran Youth Encounter	9%	10%	5%	7%
Served in the U.S. Armed Forces	5%	9%	7%	7%
U.S. Peace Corps, Americorps, or other non-Lutheran service organization	4%	7%	3%	4%
Lutheran Volunteer Corps	5%	2%	1%	3%
Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)	4%	2%	1%	2%

- Serving on summer camp staff was most frequently part of a long pattern of involvement with Christian ministries and activities. In the case of every variable measuring church or faith involvement in childhood and adolescence, those serving on camp staff were significantly more likely to have the experience and participate with more frequency than those who did not serve on camp staff. It can be concluded that the more involved someone was in church ministries and activities, the more likely they were to serve on summer camp staff.
- Those who served on summer camp staff (particularly at a LOM camp) were also more likely to participate in Lutheran service opportunities like Lutheran Youth Encounter, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, and Young Adults in Global Mission.

Table 17: Demographic Distribution Based on Varying Experiences as Camper and Summer Staff

	No Camp Experience <i>n</i> =835	No staff experience		Served summer staff	
		Attended 1-3 times <i>n</i> =656	Attended 4+ times <i>n</i> =289	Attended 0-3 times <i>n</i> =636	Attended 4+ times <i>n</i> =523
Median age when rostered	33	30	29	28	28
Female	45%	43%	41%	38%	45%
Male	55%	57%	59%	62%	54%
Other gender	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	1%
White/Caucasian	95%	96%	98%	96%	97%
Black/African-American	2%	1%	< 1%	1%	1%
Hispanic/Latinx	1%	1%	< 1%	1%	1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%
Other or mixed race	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Identifies as LGBTQIA+	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%
Age 45 and under	12%	14%	15%	25%	33%
Age 46-65	43%	43%	39%	28%	37%
Age over 65	45%	43%	46%	37%	30%
Attended ELCA college/university	26%	40%	46%	53%	58%
Camp enthusiasts	26%	31%	43%	45%	61%
Camp accommodators	46%	49%	44%	41%	33%
Camp skeptics	28%	20%	13%	14%	6%
ELCA regular (or combo regular)	52%	70%	83%	75%	84%
Non-ELCA regular	28%	22%	14%	17%	14%
Engager	5%	4%	2%	4%	1%
Inconsistent	3%	1%	< 1%	1%	< 1%
Dis-engager	6%	2%	1%	2%	1%
Not engaged or non-Christian	6%	1%	< 1%	1%	< 1%

- Increased frequency of camp attendance correlated with consistent congregational engagement. Those who attended camp 4+ times as children/youth were most likely to be church regulars. Conversely, those with no camp experience had the widest variety of church engagement patterns, with only 80% being church regulars. While not all engaged young people who grew up to become pastors went to camp, the vast majority who went to camp were also consistently engaged in church throughout childhood.
- As expected, the more frequent camp experiences a rostered minister reported, the more likely they were to be a camp enthusiast. Those with no camp experiences as a camper or staff person had roughly even odds at being a camp enthusiast (26%) or camp skeptic (28%). Conversely, those with the most camp experiences had very little likelihood of being a camp skeptic (6%).
- The more camp experiences a respondent had, the younger they were, on average, when ordained or consecrated.

Table 18: Impact of Childhood/Youth Experiences on Age when Rostered and Camp Engagement

	Median Age when Rostered	% Worked at camp	% Camp Enthusiasts
ALL RESPONDENTS	30	40%	39%
Female (<i>n=1163</i>)	35	41%	40%
Male (<i>n=1583</i>)	28	39%	40%
Other gender (<i>n=13</i>)	27	69%	54%
White/Caucasian (<i>n=2830</i>)	29	41%	40%
Black/African-American (<i>n=42</i>)	40	36%	17%
Hispanic/Latinx (<i>n=30</i>)	40	52%	17%
Asian or Pacific Islander (<i>n=21</i>)	33	29%	29%
Identifies as LGBTQIA+ (<i>n=138</i>)	30	42%	35%
Does not identify as LGBTQIA+ (<i>n=2741</i>)	30	40%	40%
Age 45 and under (<i>n=560</i>)	29	59%	51%
Age 46-65 (<i>n=1192</i>)	32	37%	43%
Age over 65 (<i>n=1215</i>)	28	35%	30%
Attended Sunday school less than monthly (<i>n=187</i>)	34	24%	29%
Sunday school at least monthly, but not weekly (<i>n=265</i>)	30	37%	36%
Attended Sunday school weekly or more (<i>n=2506</i>)	29	41%	41%
Never attended VBS (<i>n=459</i>)	34	24%	28%
Attended VBS 1-3 times (<i>n=387</i>)	30	35%	33%
Attended VBS 4 or more times (<i>n=2076</i>)	29	43%	43%
Was not confirmed (<i>n=219</i>)	41	20%	26%
Was confirmed before age 18 (<i>n=2743</i>)	29	41%	40%
Never attended ELCA Gathering (<i>n=1939</i>)	31	32%	36%
Attended ELCA Gathering at least once (<i>n=1000</i>)	28	53%	45%
Participation in high school youth group:			
Almost never (<i>n=377</i>)	38	17%	31%
Occasionally to once per month (<i>n=552</i>)	30	37%	42%
More than monthly (<i>n=1986</i>)	29	45%	41%
Never attended overnight summer camp (<i>n=1052</i>)	32	20%	30%
Attended overnight summer camp once (<i>n=429</i>)	29	31%	34%
Attended overnight summer camp 2-3 times (<i>n=639</i>)	29	45%	38%
Attended overnight summer camp 4+ times (<i>n=805</i>)	28	64%	55%
Attended ELCA college (<i>n=1281</i>)	27	52%	44%
Did not attend an ELCA college (<i>n=1629</i>)	33	32%	36%
Participation in college campus ministry:			
Almost never (<i>n=785</i>)	36	21%	34%
Occasionally to once per month (<i>n=445</i>)	30	41%	37%
More than monthly (<i>n=1689</i>)	28	48%	43%

Independent Factors in Call to Ministry

In logistic regression analysis, several factors consistently impact the likelihood that a rostered minister served on summer camp staff. These include, in order of most impactful:

- Increased frequency of attending overnight camp as a child/youth
- Increased frequency of participation in college campus ministry
- Attendance of the ELCA Gathering while in high school (if grew up in ELCA congregation)
- Increased frequency of attending overnight church retreats (if grew up in ELCA congregation)

The more involved a person was in the life and ministry of the church throughout childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, the younger they tended to be when rostered in the ELCA. Several individual experiences were key predictors in a leader becoming rostered at a younger age. Considering the experiences detailed in the above table, five experiences stood out:

- Attendance of an ELCA college/university
- Serving on summer camp staff at least once, particularly at a LOM camp
- Attendance of the ELCA Gathering while in high school
- Frequent attendance of college campus ministry worship or events (particularly those attending more than monthly)
- Frequent overnight camp attendance (particularly those attending 4 or more times)

If a respondent had **any one of these experiences** ($n=2449$), the median age they were rostered in the ELCA was 29. If a respondent had none of these experiences ($n=553$), the median age they were rostered in the ELCA was 41.

If a respondent did not have one of the above five experiences, one of the other four could generally be substituted to lower the median age to 29 or even 28. In the case of respondents who did not attend an ELCA college/university, two of the other four needed to be present, unless the respondent served on summer staff at a LOM camp, which brought the median age back to 29.

In a series of regression analyses, four of these five factors (with the exception of camp attendance) were consistently identified as the most independently impactful experiences measured. The only factors more impactful were demographic variables. In particular, being white and being male were key predictors of being rostered at a younger age. Three of the regression models are shown on the subsequent page.

Table 19: OLS Regression Analysis of 3 Models on Age when Rostered

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	F _(74,840) =56.461*** R ² =.317 Adj. R ² =.311	F _(75,653) =62.785*** R ² =.314 Adj. R ² =.309	F _(76,245) =67.191*** R ² =.314 Adj. R ² =.310
	t value	t value	t value
Demographic Variables:			
Gender (male, female, other)	17.020***	17.093***	17.316***
Race (white, black, Hispanic, Asian, other, mixed)	2.588*	2.581*	2.494*
Age categories (45 and under, 46-65, over 65)	8.608***	8.765***	9.108***
Region of the ELCA currently rostered (1-9)	-1.694	-1.544	-1.429
Denominational upbringing (ELCA, other Christian, non-Christian)	6.852***	6.886***	6.914***
Test Variables			
Frequency of attending Sunday school	2.227*	3.558***	3.579***
Frequency attending worship services in middle school	2.244*	-	-
Frequency attending worship service in high school	-2.555*	-	-
Frequency of participation in youth group in high school	0.133	-0.573	-0.687
Frequency of participation in campus ministry in college	-9.138***	-9.407***	-9.528***
Participation in confirmation program (<i>confirmed, participated but not confirmed, did not participate</i>)	2.263*	2.144*	2.104*
# times attending VBS	-1.869	-1.791	-1.731
# times attending overnight church retreats	-1.402	-1.432	-1.800
# times attending overnight Christian summer camp	-0.349	-0.269	-0.503
# times attending mission/service trips	0.527	0.472	-
# summers serving on Christian summer camp staff	-2.753**	-2.900**	-2.935**
Attended ELCA Gathering at least once (<i>yes, no</i>)	-3.096**	-2.966**	-3.135**
Attended ELCA college/university (<i>yes, no</i>)	-7.882***	-7.989***	-7.887***
Participated in one or more year-long service opportunities as young adult	-1.035	-0.619	-
Attended mission/service trip at least once (<i>yes, no</i>)	-	-	1.786

- Model 1 has covariant problems, particularly with the frequency of church attendance in elementary, middle, and high school. Frequency of attending church in middle school is very significantly correlated with frequency of attending Sunday school ($r=.679$) and frequency of attending worship in high school ($r=.619$). Additionally, frequency of attending worship in high school is highly correlated with frequency of attending youth group ($r=.548$). These problems are corrected in Model 2 by excluding frequency of attending worship in middle school and high school.
- Model 3 changed the frequency of attending mission/service trips to a simple dummy variable (yes/no), since few respondents participated more than once. Additionally, participation in a year-long service opportunity was removed.

- The most consistently significant factors were demographic. If respondents were male, over 65, and grew up in an ELCA home, they were consistently rostered at a younger age, on average.
- College experiences were also consistently important. Aside from being male, the most significant factor for being rostered at a younger age was attending an ELCA college/university. Closely following this was degree of involvement in campus ministry (whether at an ELCA or non-ELCA college). As involvement in campus ministry increased, age of being rostered decreased (indicated by the negative t-value).
- The other two consistently significant factors were attendance of the ELCA Gathering at least once and frequency of serving on summer camp staff. The more times a respondent served on summer camp staff, the younger they tended to be when rostered.
- The significance of the frequency of attending Sunday school is difficult to explain. The positive relationship indicates that as Sunday school attendance increased, age when rostered also increased, which is the opposite of what is expected. The two variables are negatively correlated, indicating that the discrepancy is a problem with the regression model. Because there is so little variation in the frequency of attending Sunday school, most of the variation can be explained with other variables (such as being raised in an ELCA, non-ELCA, or non-Christian home).