



Wespath

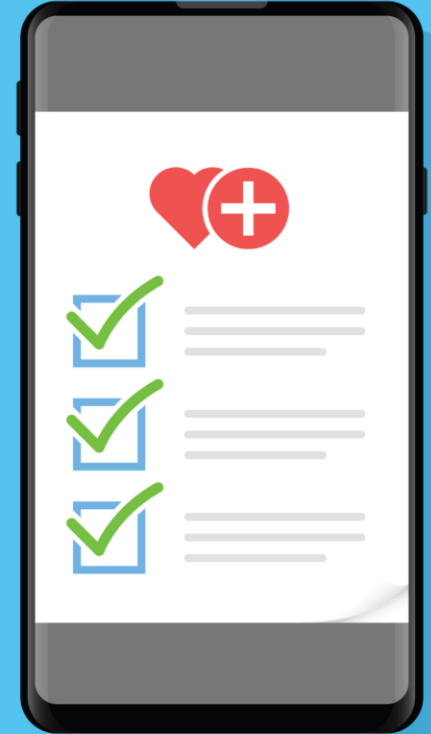
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

Clergy Well-Being Update

Conference Forum | March 2024

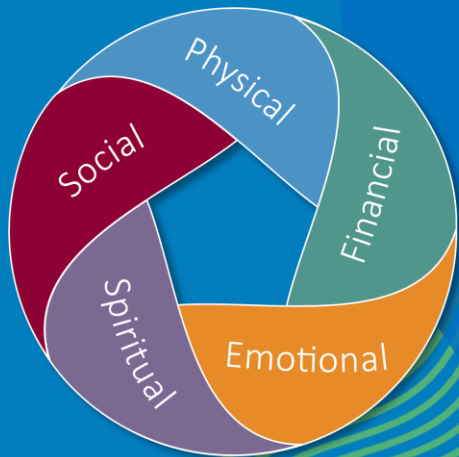
Agenda

- 2023 Clergy Well-Being Survey
- 10-Year Lookback
- Callouts from 2023
- Resources and Looking Forward



Wespath's Well-Being Focus

- Clergy well-being impacts their families, congregations and communities
- Wespath's well-being focus highlights five dimensions of well-being—physical, emotional, spiritual, social and financial

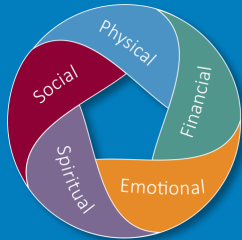




Survey Overview

Wespath conducted its seventh
Clergy Well-Being Survey in 2023

- Outreach to a random sample of active, U.S. clergy in the UMC
- 5,000 received invitation
- 25% response rate
- Compared to national benchmarks (NHIS, NHANES)
 - Match on gender, age, marital status, race/ethnicity



PHYSICAL



FINANCIAL



EMOTIONAL



SPIRITUAL



SOCIAL

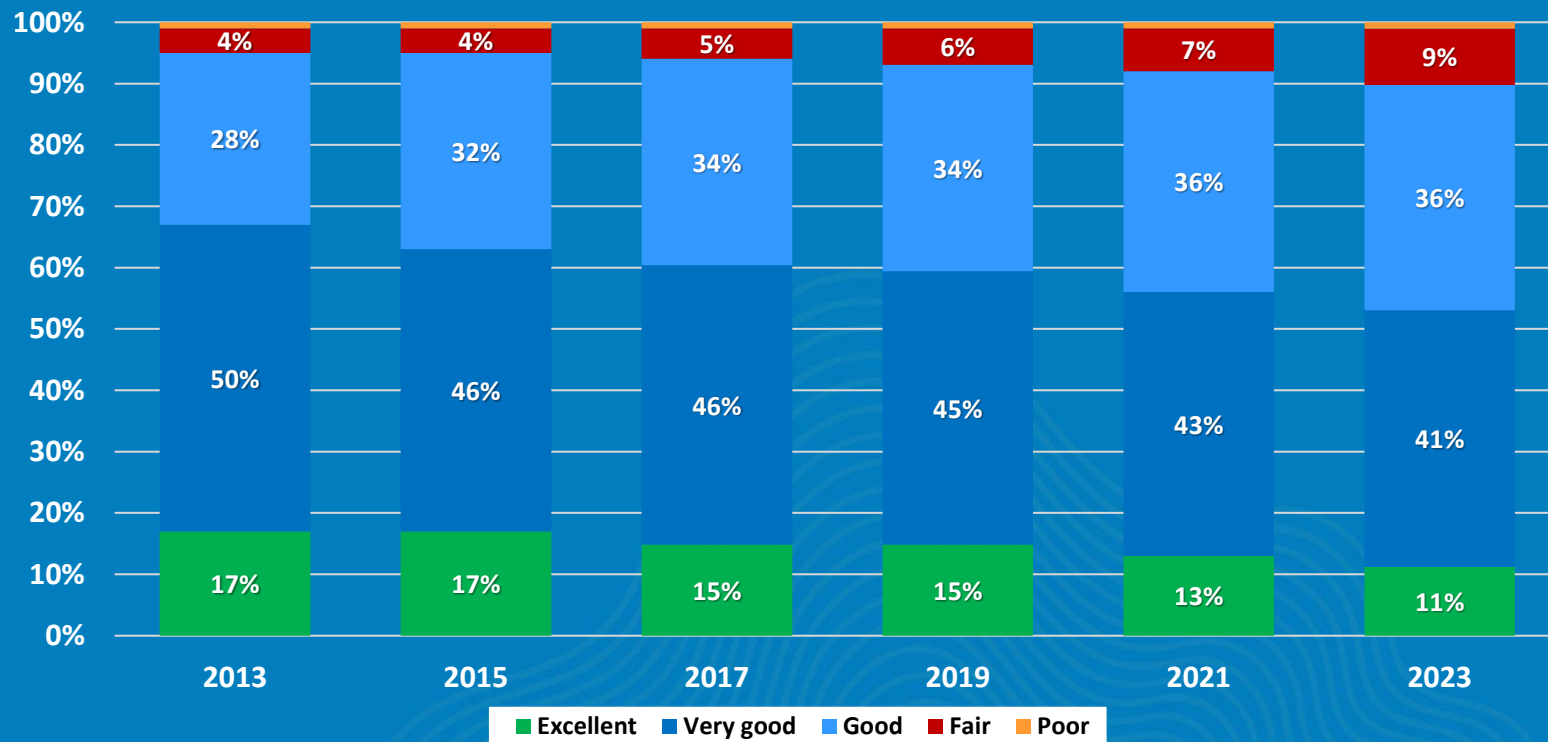
10-Year Lookback



2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023


Decline in Overall Perceived Well-Being—10-Year Trends

The number of clergy reporting “very good” or “excellent” health has had a steady decline



Emotional Dimension— 10-Year Lookback

Difficulty functioning due to depressive symptoms
much worse than 2013



| | 2013 | 2023 |
|---|------|------|
| Feeling tired or without energy | 59% | 69% |
| Trouble sleeping | 40% | 52% |
| Poor appetite/overeating | 36% | 44% |
| Little interest/pleasure in doing things | 23% | 35% |
| Feeling down, depressed or have trouble concentrating | 19% | 32% |

- Total percent experiencing functional difficulty from depressive symptoms more than twice the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) benchmark since 2013
- The number of clergy actually being treated for depression is only up a small amount, suggesting many continue to go untreated

Emotional Dimension Today



Most measures of perceived stress remain at concerning levels similar to 2021 (an emotional health low-point):

- 42%** Feel things were not going their way
- 39%** Not able to control irritations in their life
- 35%** Don't feel "on top of things"
- 25%** Feel nervous and stressed

Two measures of depressive symptoms are worse than 2021 and the rest remain at concerning levels similar to 2021:

- 69%** Feel tired or have little energy (*worse than 2021*)
- 44%** Poor appetite or overeating (*worse than 2021*)
- 52%** Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- 35%** Have little interest or pleasure in doing things

Physical Dimension— 10-Year Lookback



- Physical well-being (obesity, diabetes, pre-diabetes) worse than 2013
- Rate of obesity in clergy consistently >10 percentage points worse than a matched National Health Interview Survey benchmark

| | 2013 | 2023 |
|--------------|------|------|
| Obesity | 40% | 49% |
| Diabetes | 12% | 14% |
| Pre-diabetes | 9% | 14% |

Spiritual Dimension— 10-Year Lookback



- Less dramatic decline than other dimensions of well-being
- Over the past 10 years, greatest decline in:
 - “I feel sense of harmony in myself”
 - “I feel peaceful”

Spiritual Dimension Today

Spiritual vitality and well-being up from 2021



Spiritual Vitality

Feel the presence of God
in ministry

73%



When conducting
pastoral visitations

68%



When participating in
Church-related events

Spiritual Vitality

Feel the presence of God
in daily life

78%



Have a vital relationship
with God

70%



Feel God's grace and God's
love as they are, apart
from any accomplishments
or good works



Indicates improvement from 2021 results



Financial Dimension— 10-Year Lookback

- Financial stress has remained relatively stable, but almost 75% of clergy are at least slightly stressed by finances
- Only six years of data for financial knowledge/retirement readiness but only a little more than half respond favorably here.



Social Dimension— 10-Year Lookback

Social connection has worsened
over 10 years

| | 2013 | 2023 |
|------------------------------|------|------|
| Feel understood most of time | 81% | 72% |
| Feel understood hardly ever | 1% | 4% |

Work-Related Stress— 10-Year Lookback

Mixed story: work-related stress has worsened, but percentage of clergy working excessive hours has decreased



| | 2013 | 2023 |
|---|------|------|
| Experiencing stress because of challenges in the organization or congregation | 46% | 52% |
| Feel lonely and isolated at work | 25% | 33% |
| Full-time clergy working 51+ hours/week | 42% | 27% |
| Part-time clergy working 41+ hours/week | 21% | 16% |

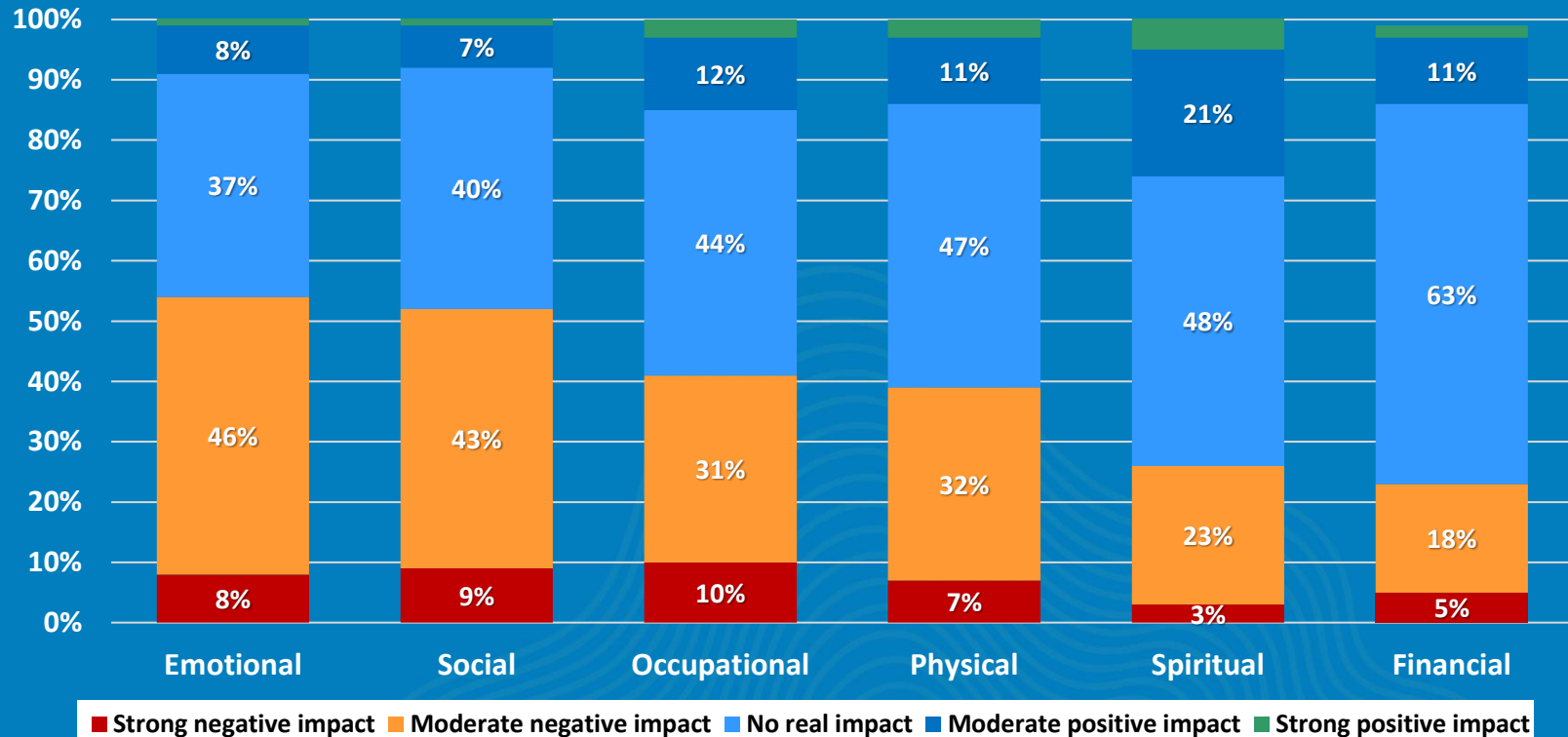
**2023 Highlights
and Demographic
Differences**

2023



Impact of the Pandemic on Well-Being

More than half of clergy reported the pandemic negatively affected their social and emotional well-being



Impact of Disaffiliation



- 37% of clergy reported dealing with conflict or difficulty with disaffiliation in their ministry
- Disaffiliation conflict impacts all dimensions of well-being:

Clergy who reported **some or a lot** of disaffiliation conflict or difficulty had higher risk of arthritis*, functional difficulty from depressive symptoms, social connection, occupational stressors and financial stress than clergy who reported **little or no** conflict

* *Arthritis is associated with inflammation, which can increase as stress levels increase*

Key Demographic Differences



Men: higher rates of heart disease and diabetes, lower spiritual vitality;

Women: higher rates of asthma and autoimmune, more stress

Older clergy: more physical ailments;

Younger clergy: more stress, depression and spiritual health concerns

White/non-Hispanic clergy: higher rates of depression, lower spiritual health

Black clergy: more diabetes and hypertension, better spiritual well-being, lower stress and depression

Asian clergy: lower obesity, diabetes and autoimmune, less stress

Hispanic clergy: more occupational stress, conflict over disaffiliation

Rural clergy: more physical ailments;
Urban clergy: more spiritual health concerns

Key Vocational Differences



Part-time local pastors: less depression, better spiritual well-being, less stress

Full-time clergy: lower spiritual vitality, lower well-being, more stress

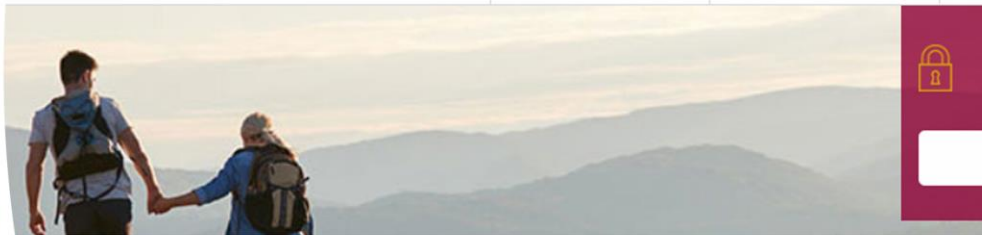
Associate pastors: fewer physical ailments, sleep more each night than sole or lead pastors

Clergy at smaller churches: more ailments, take fewer vacation days;
Clergy at larger churches: more occupational stress, lower spiritual well-being

Church planters: better overall health, spiritual and social health, more physical activity

Clergy who frequently change appointments: lower overall health, more depression and stress, lower spiritual health

Clergy in cross-racial or cross-cultural appointments: less depression, better spiritual health, more positive ministry settings



Wespath Benefits and Investments

We're dedicated to building a brighter future for all those we serve, with 100 years of success and sustainable plans, investment solutions and health benefit plans.



Retirement & Investments

Secure financial future with retirement plan benefits and investment solutions available to employees.



Health & Well-Being

Discover an array of benefits and resources to support your health and vitality, from group health plans and well-being programs to life and long-term disability coverage for UMC clergy, employees and their families.



For Current Plan Sponsors

Access plan administration resources and support to help plan sponsors effectively manage their health benefits and retirement plans.



Wespath Resources

First Aid For Mental Health





- Original reach = 4,000 touchpoints on live webinars in 2022
- Continued reach = almost 2,000 watches of the recordings in 2023-2024
- Champions training – 51 trained across 21 conferences
- Recordings still available – please share!



Virgin Pulse

- 11 plan sponsors covering over 3,000 participants outside of HealthFlex
- 30% to 36% active participation in 2023 Challenges



Focus on the things that matter
You deserve to feel your best

How do you envision your wellbeing a year from now? Set a meaningful, positive goal for yourself and we'll help you stick to it!



Well-Being Resources Through HealthFlex

- \$0 cost share for MDLIVE, including behavioral health
- 8 EAP sessions annually at no cost – virtual or in person
- Omada diabetes prevention and management
- Holistic coaching
- New Care Coordination program



Looking Forward



Furthering the Conversation

HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Prioritizing Pastoral Care

A Series on Clergy Well-Being

GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY | FEBRUARY 28, 2024

Prioritizing Pastoral Care: A Series on Clergy Well-Being

The well-being of United Methodist clergy profoundly affects the entire UMC Connection, including the including families of clergy, and the congregations and communities clergy serve. Over the past 10 years, Wespath Benefits and Investments has conducted a bi-annual survey to assess clergy well-being across five essential dimensions – emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and financial. **The data is deeply concerning—over the last decade clergy well-being has continually declined in all five dimensions.**

| Emotional Dimension—10-Year Lookback | 2013 | 2023 |
|--|------|------|
| Difficulty functioning due to depressive symptoms in their work (last in 2013) | 46% | 58% |
| Feeling over-extended/overwhelmed | 46% | 58% |
| Feeling stressed | 46% | 58% |
| Not enjoying their work | 46% | 58% |
| Life satisfaction in their work | 38% | 30% |
| Feeling alone/unsupported at work | 38% | 52% |

Wespath | 25

- Educational email series in partnership with GBHEM
 - Emotional pull
 - Opportunity for feedback on systemic impact on clergy well-being
 - Resources for more information



Furthering the Conversation



- Video interview with Dr. Ronald Bell, Director of Healing and Resilience, The Upper Room
- Future availability in podcast form



Furthering the Conversation

- Exploring in-person gatherings later this year, co-hosted with GBHEM
- Leaders and changemakers in the UMC
- Focus on systemic challenges to clergy well-being
- Brainstorming next steps for a brighter future

Clergy Well-Being Matters

Healthy You, Healthy UMC



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Wholistic Resources for the UMC

Healthy You...
Healthy UMC



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