

# SIGNS OF HOPE IN CANADIAN CONGREGATIONS

September 21, 2019

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[www.flourishingcongregations.org](http://www.flourishingcongregations.org)

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## RESEARCH TEAM



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Practical Theology & Religious Education  
Associate Director  
Ambrose University



Bill McAlpine, PhD

Practical Theology  
Leader Networker  
Ambrose University



Keith Walker, PhD

Personal & Organizational Leadership  
Member at Large  
University of Saskatchewan



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## Defining a Flourishing Congregation

- When you think of a flourishing congregation, what comes to mind?
- What would you identify as the current strengths in your congregation? Where are the greatest opportunities for development?



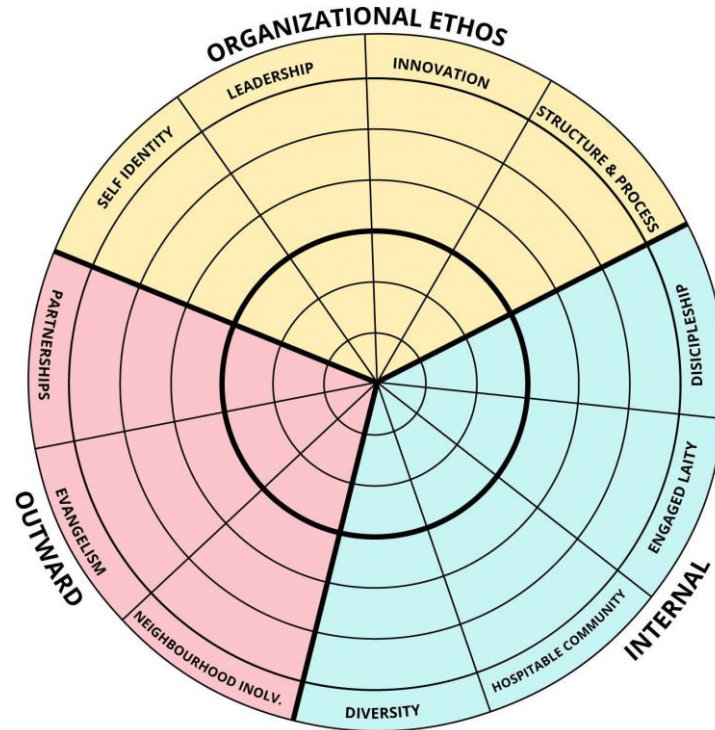
## Phase 1 Research – Interviews and Focus Groups

*When you think of a flourishing congregation, what comes to mind?*

- Divide on relationship between flourishing and numbers
- Several partially overlapping and conflicting pictures of what constitutes a flourishing congregation
- Supernatural discourse/accounts of flourishing
- See our website for article summarizing findings: “What is a Flourishing Congregation? Leader Perceptions, Definitions, and Experiences”



# Flourishing Congregations Construct



# Organizational Ethos: Self-Identity

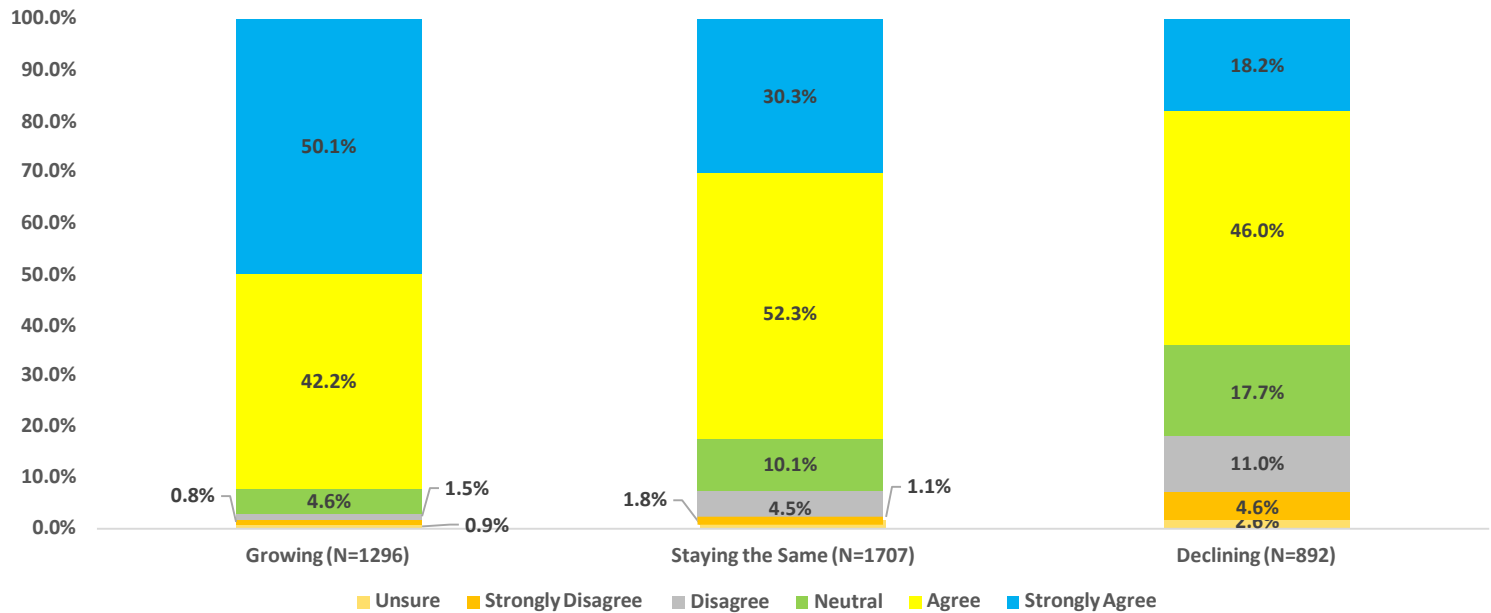


- Clear articulation of who you are and are not
- **What is your core identity and purpose for existing, and how does the answer to this question shape all church discussions and decisions?**



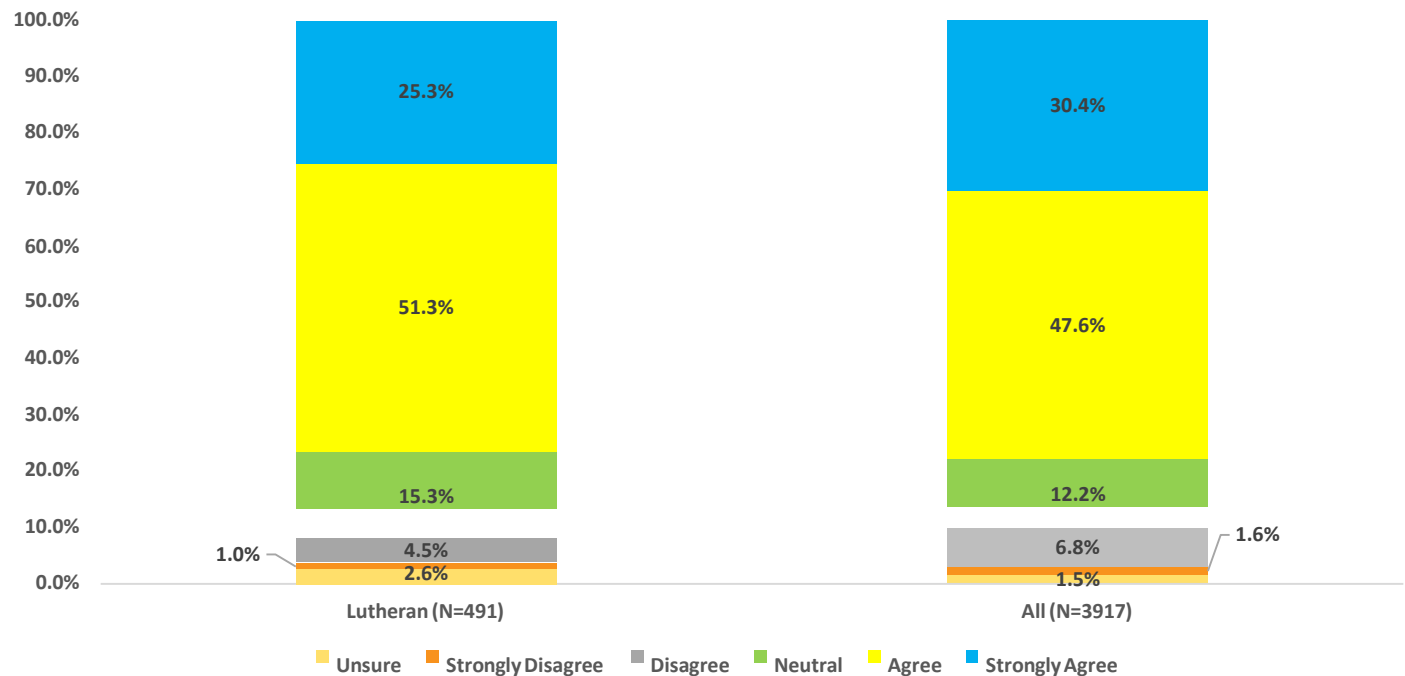
# Organizational Ethos: Self-Identity

Our congregation is clear on its core values – Growing vs. Declining



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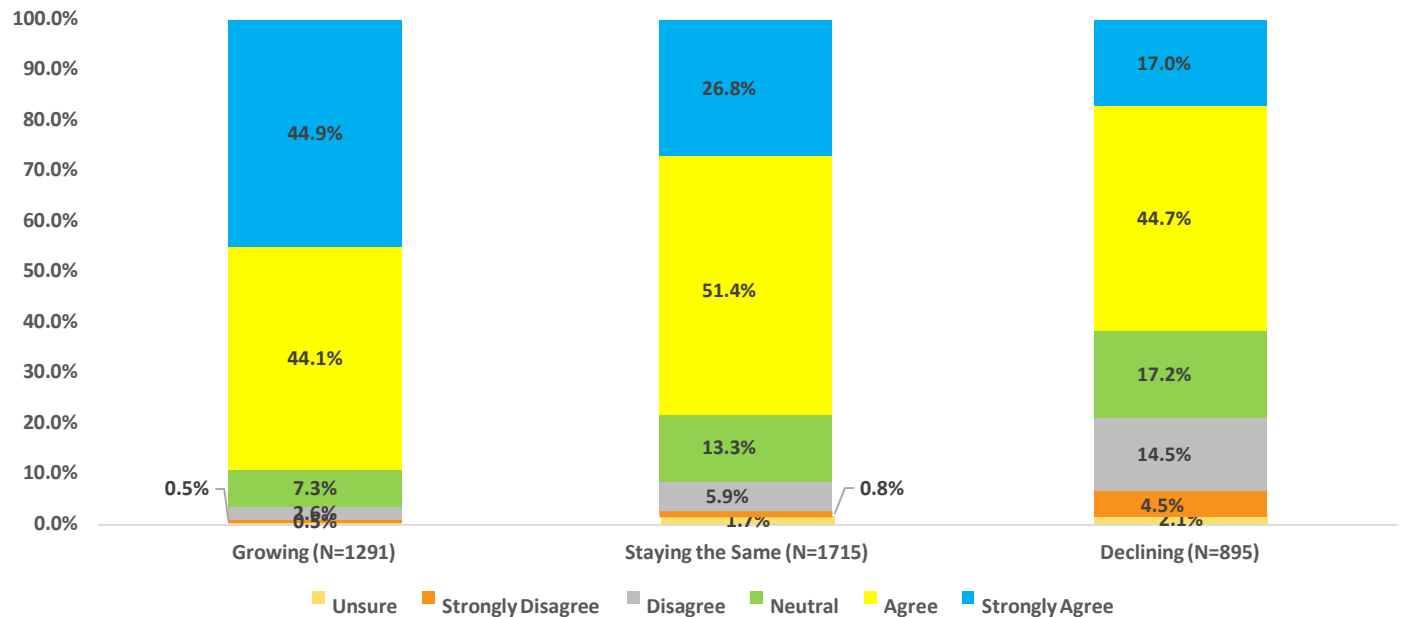
Our congregation is clear on its core values – LUTHERAN vs. ALL





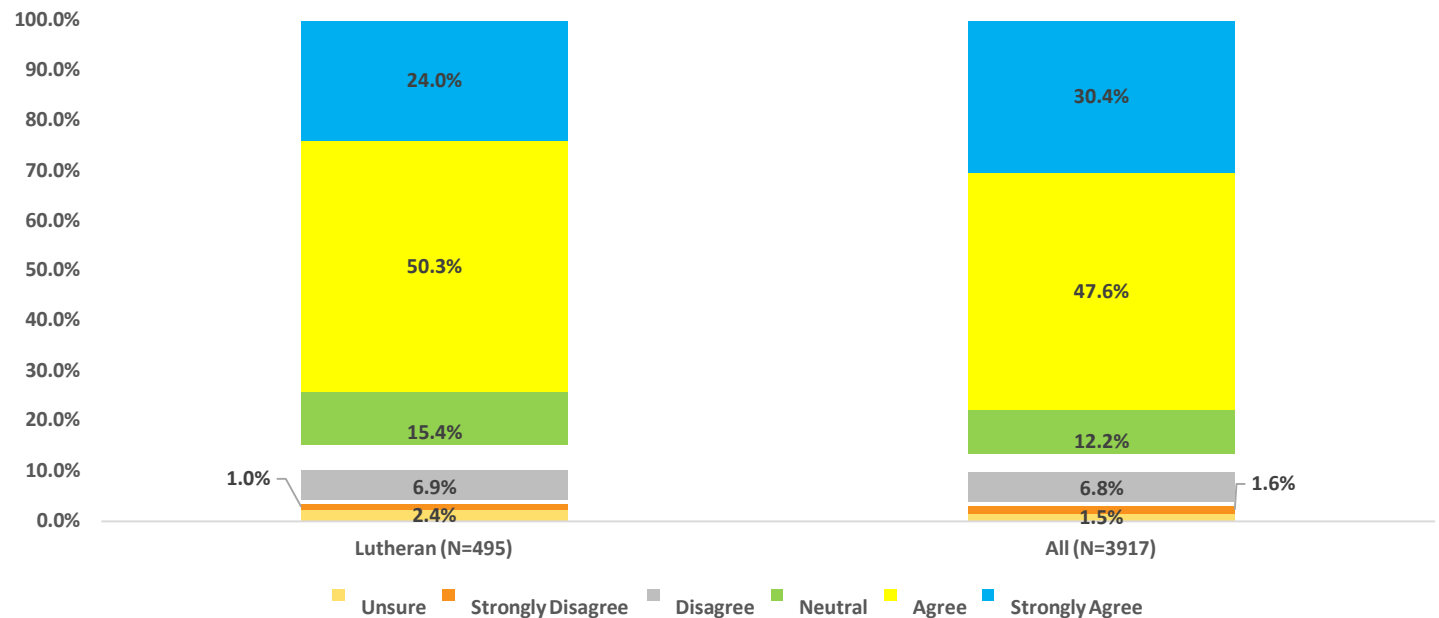
## Organizational Ethos: Self-Identity

Our congregation clearly communicates its core values to its members and attenders –  
Growing vs. Declining



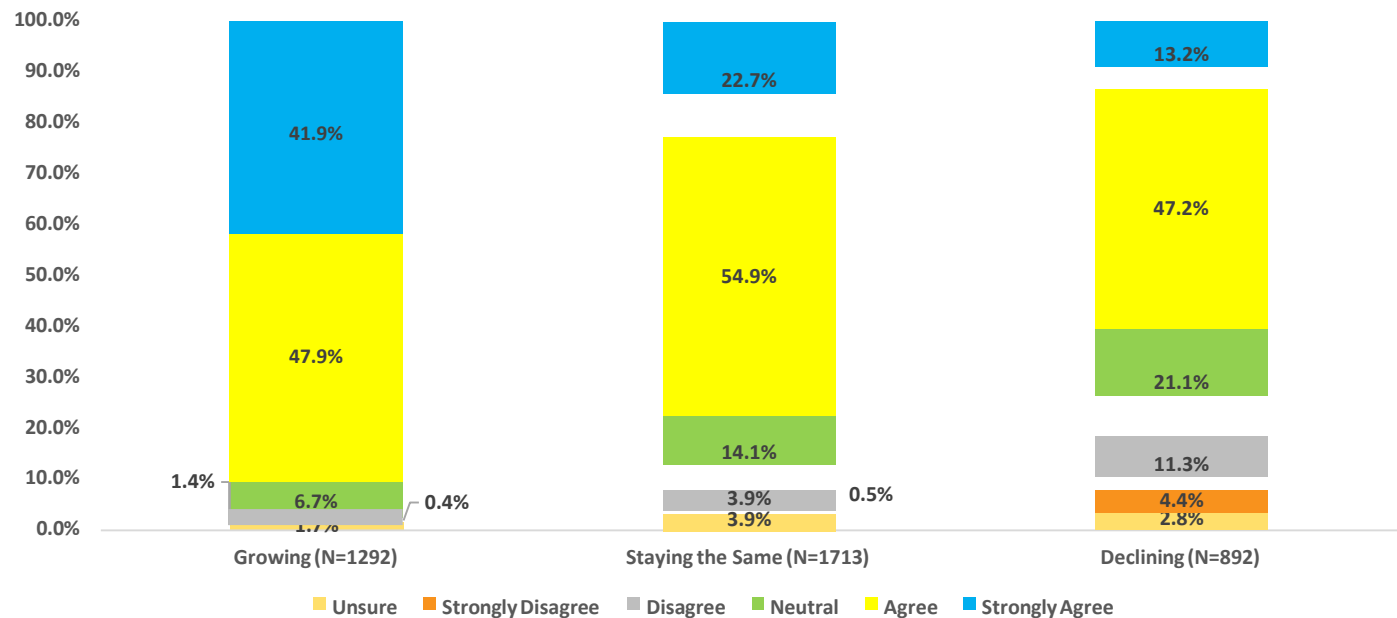
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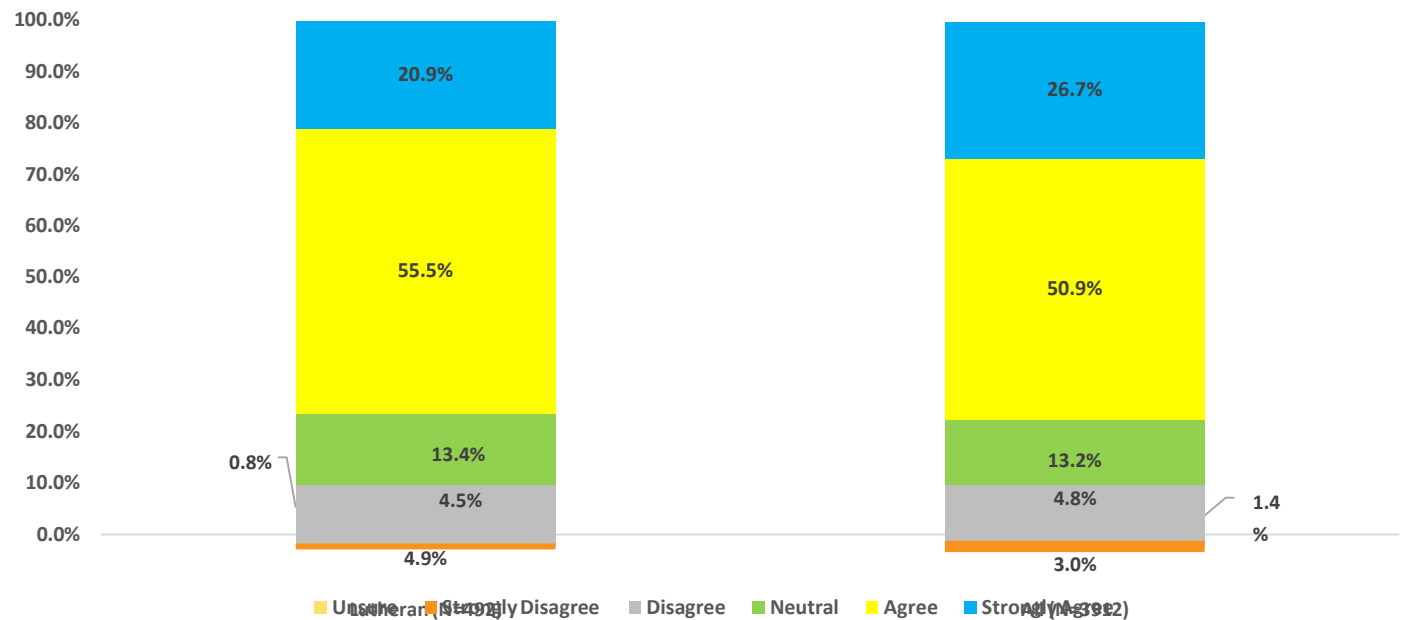
## Organizational Ethos: Self-Identity

Our congregation's core values and religious teachings clearly shape the culture and ethos of the congregation – Growing vs. Declining



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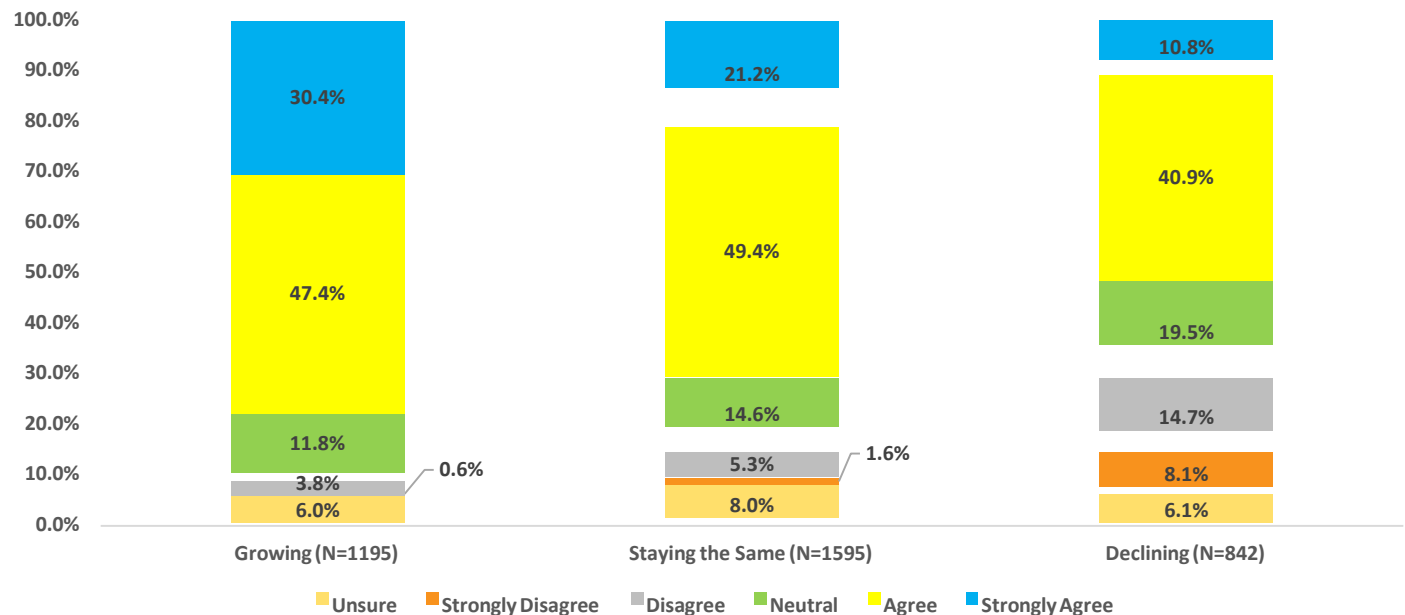
## Organizational Ethos: Leadership

- Keychain leadership – developing, equipping, and empowering leaders from within
  - **How do you encourage and hold leaders accountable to keychain leadership?**



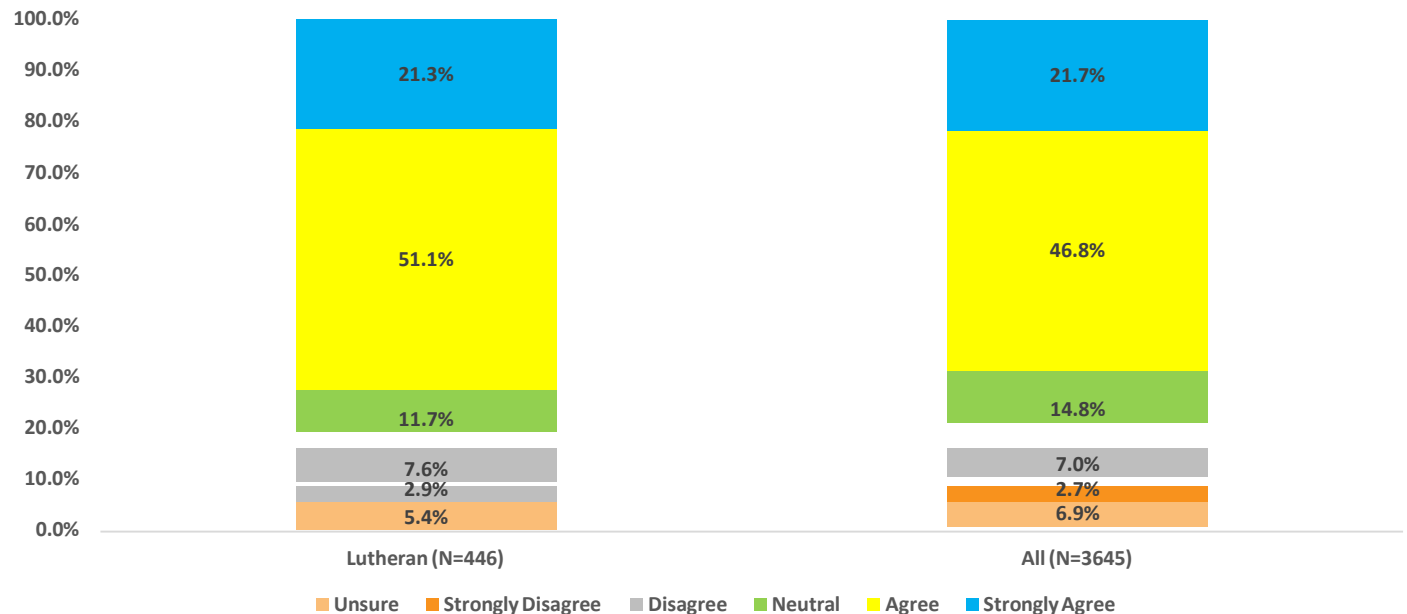
## Organizational Ethos: Leadership

**Our pastoral/church leaders take seriously the advice and ideas offered by attendees in our congregation – Growing vs. Declining**



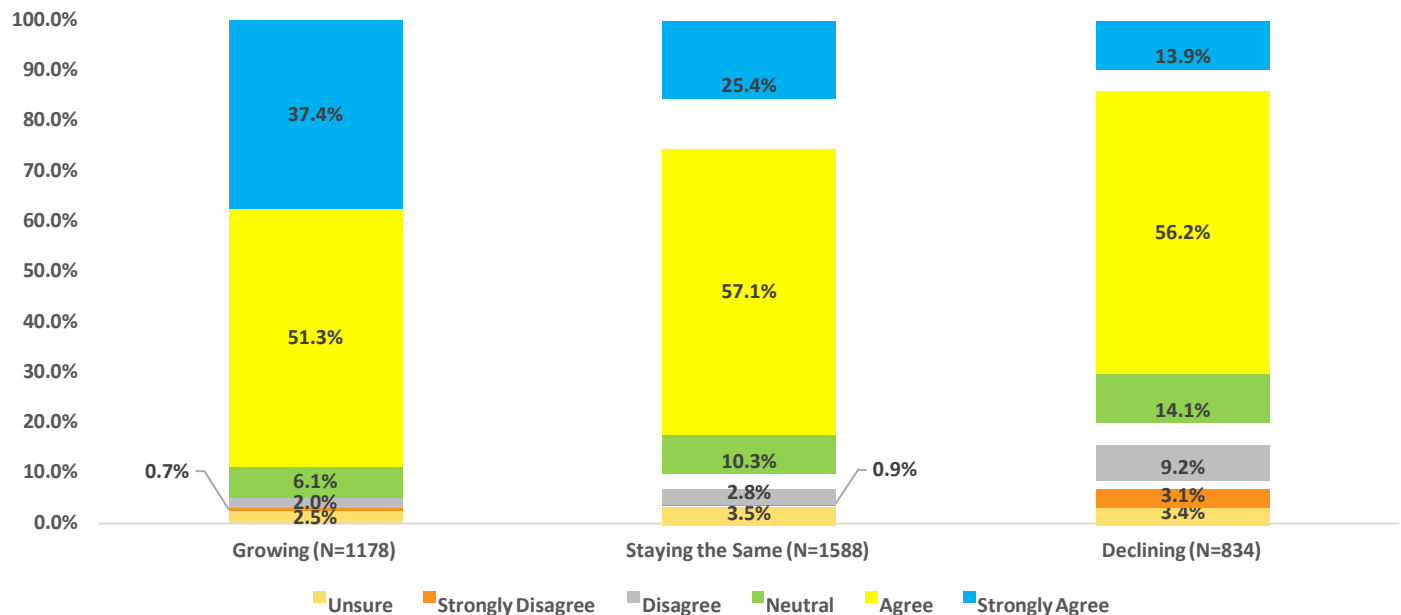
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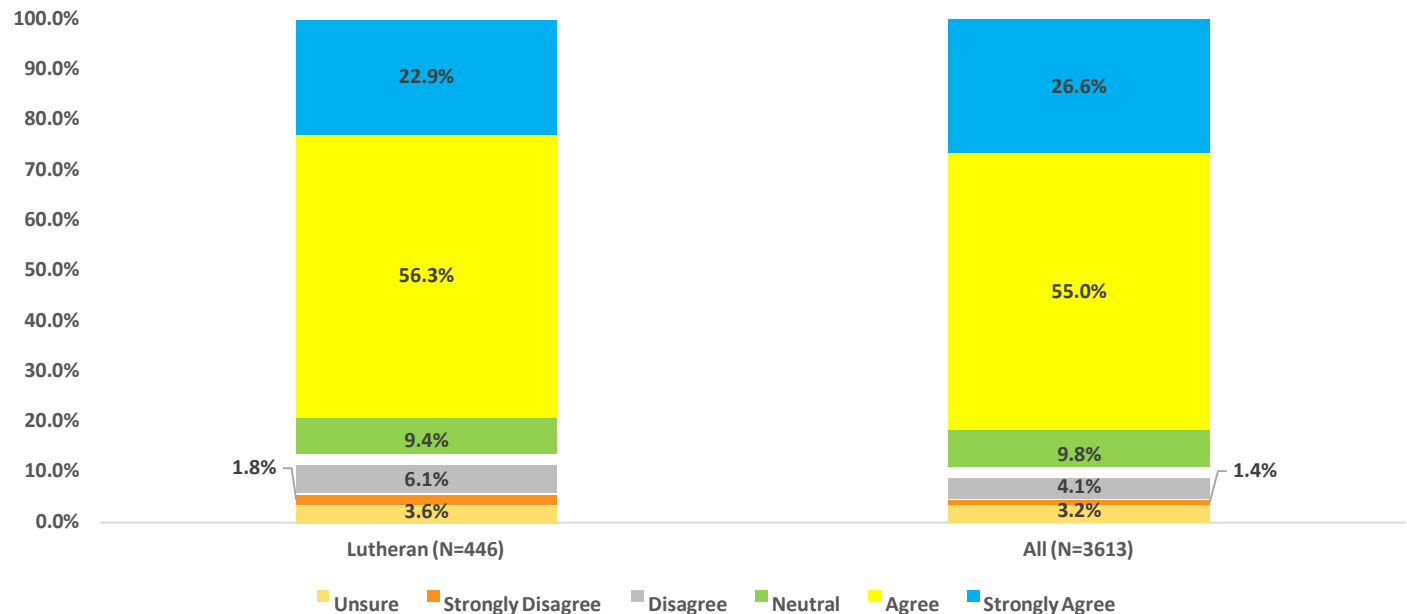
Pastoral/church leaders in our congregation appear to delegate/share tasks with others – Growing vs. Declining





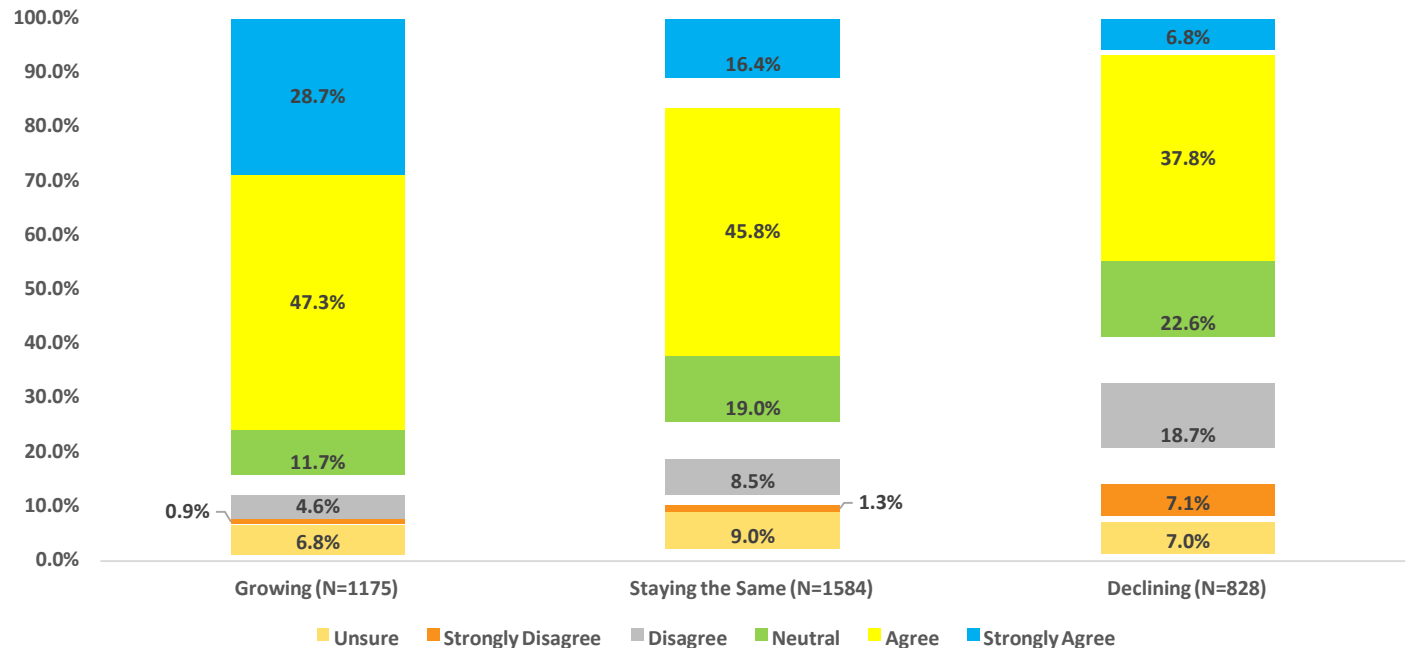
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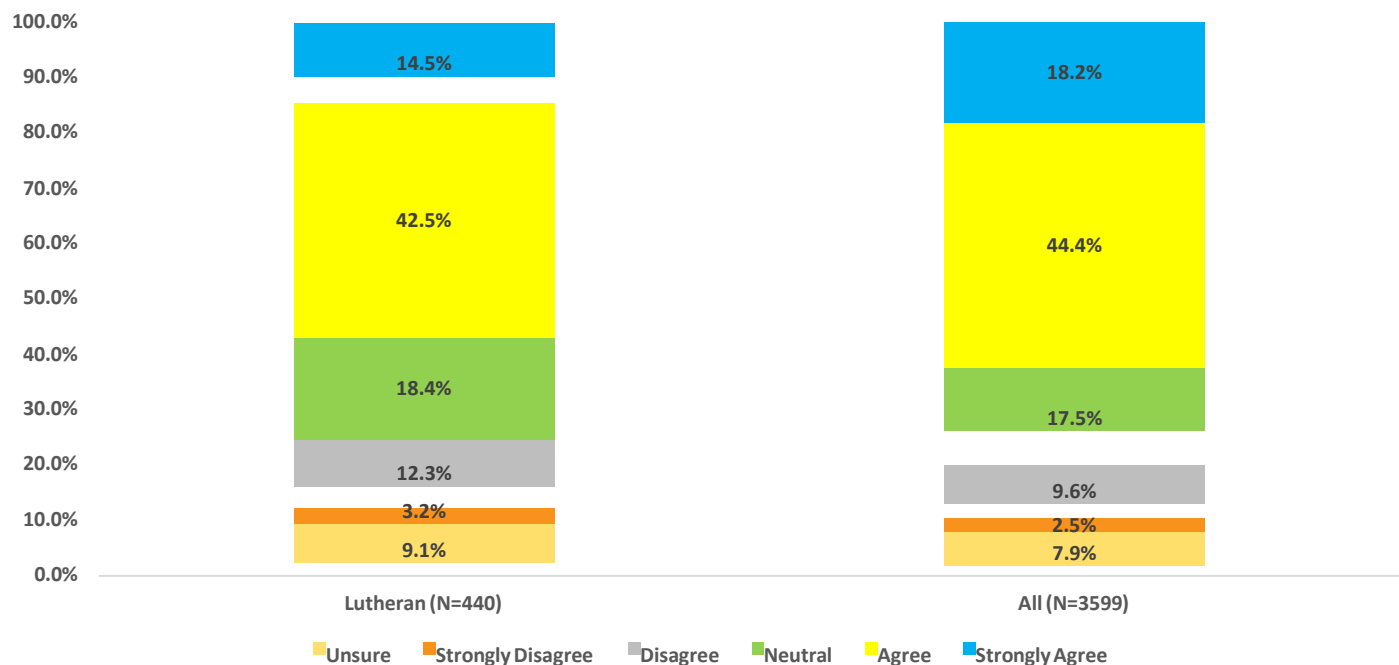
# Organizational Ethos: Leadership

Developing new (non-pastoral) leaders is ongoing within our congregation – Growing vs. Declining



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## Organizational Ethos: Innovation



- Entrepreneurial initiatives, risk-taking endeavours, and dreams
  - **Opportunities for your church to experiment (relative to core identity and vision)?**
  - **How might board and finance decisions help to equip and/or empower staff and lay leaders to try new initiatives?**



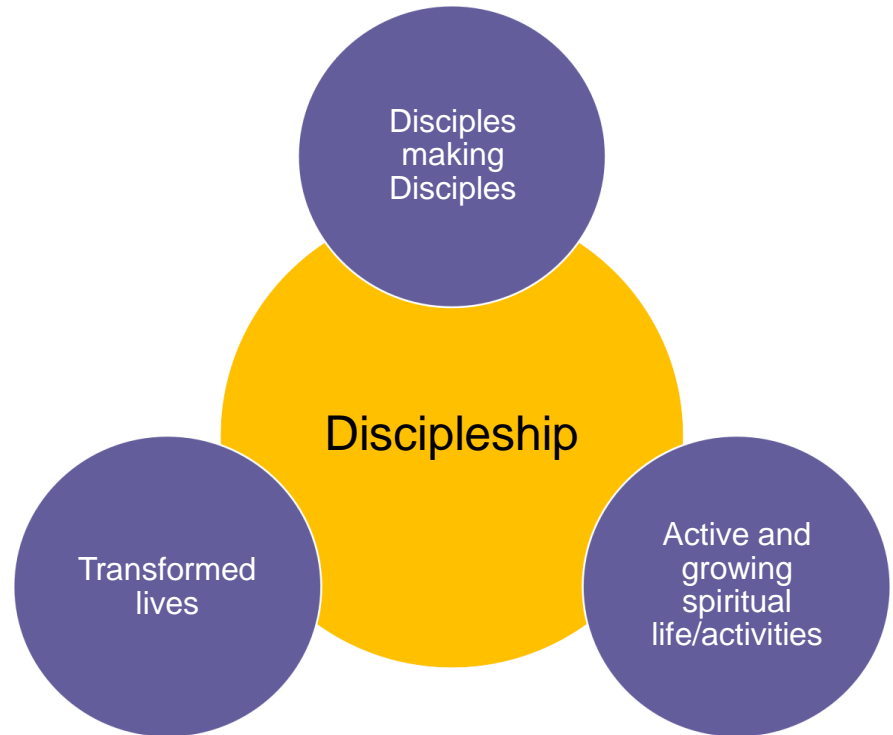
# Organizational Ethos: Structures and Processes

- Clear, effective, and functional organizational structures and processes to aid the key priorities in a congregation
- **What opportunities exist to develop or strengthen better structures and processes?**



## Internal: Discipleship

- How do you know if discipleship is happening among those at your church?
- How do you monitor progress in this dimension of ministry?



## Internal: Engaged Laity

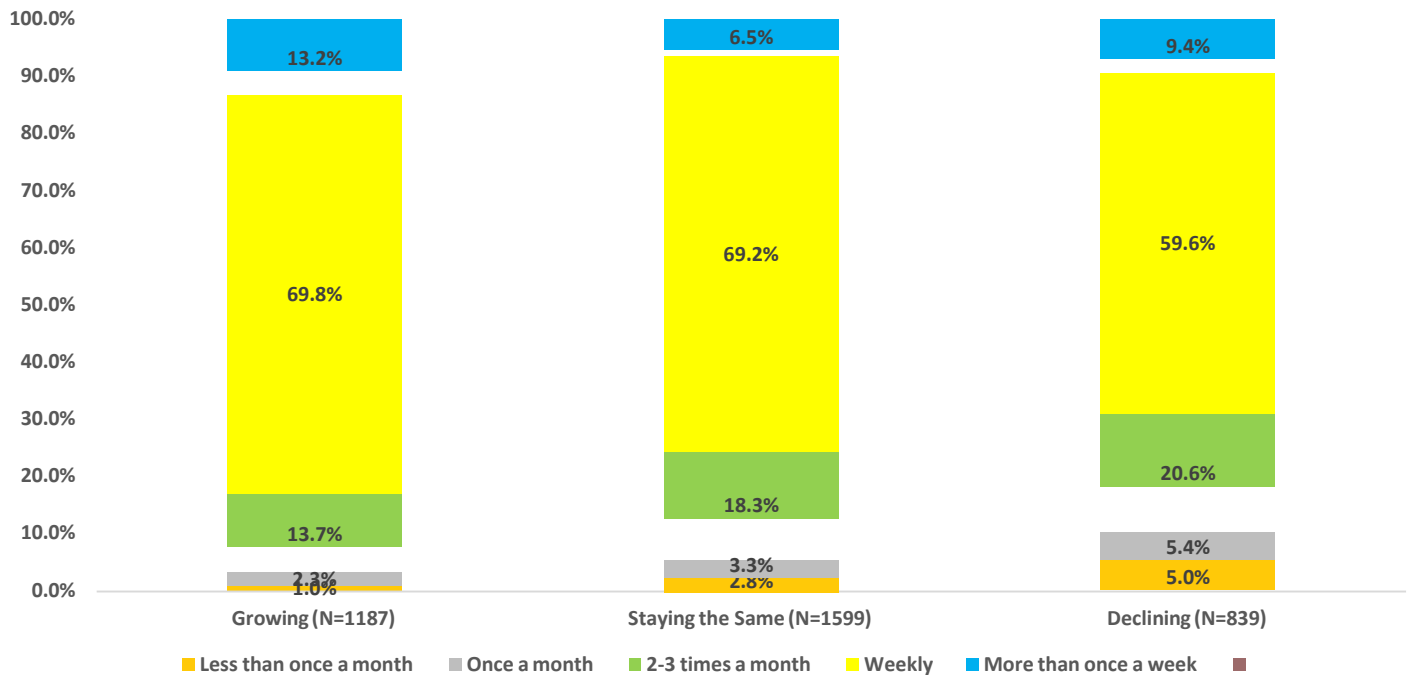


- Regular markers of involvement – attendance, tithing, other group settings, volunteer
- Proud of their congregation
  - **How do we get from “here” to “there”?**



## Internal: Engaged Laity

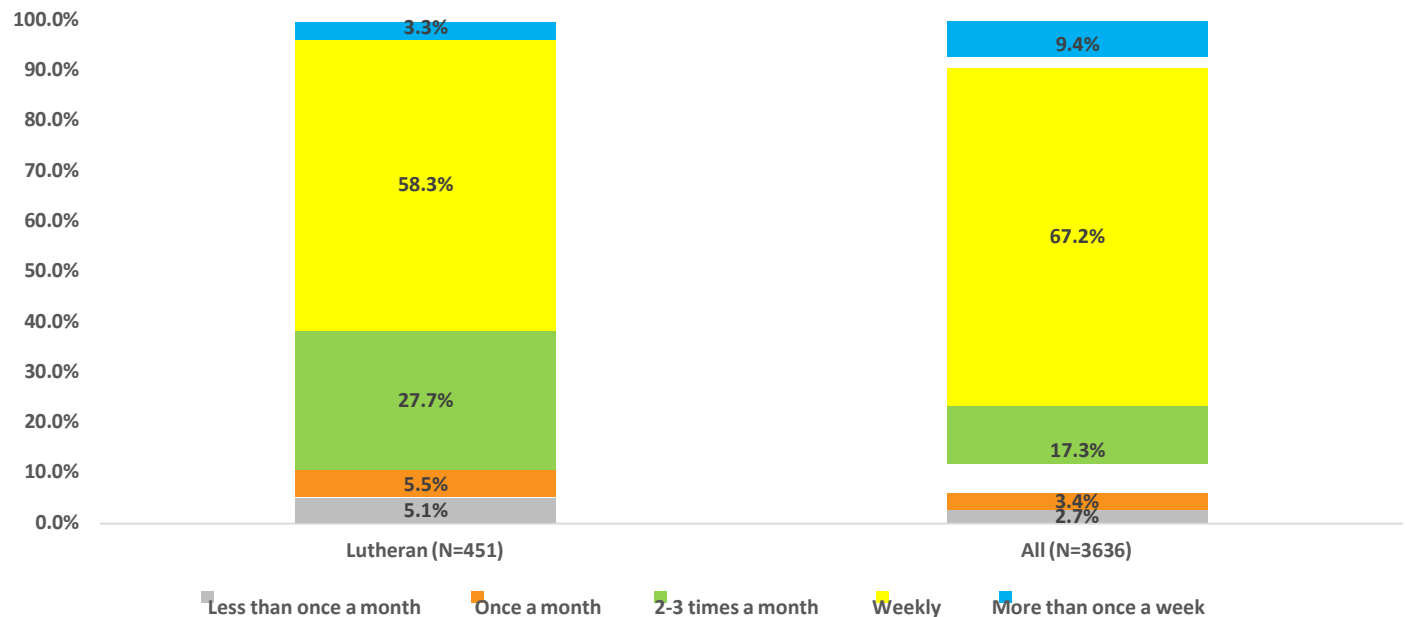
On average, how often do you attend worship services with your congregation? Growing vs. Declining





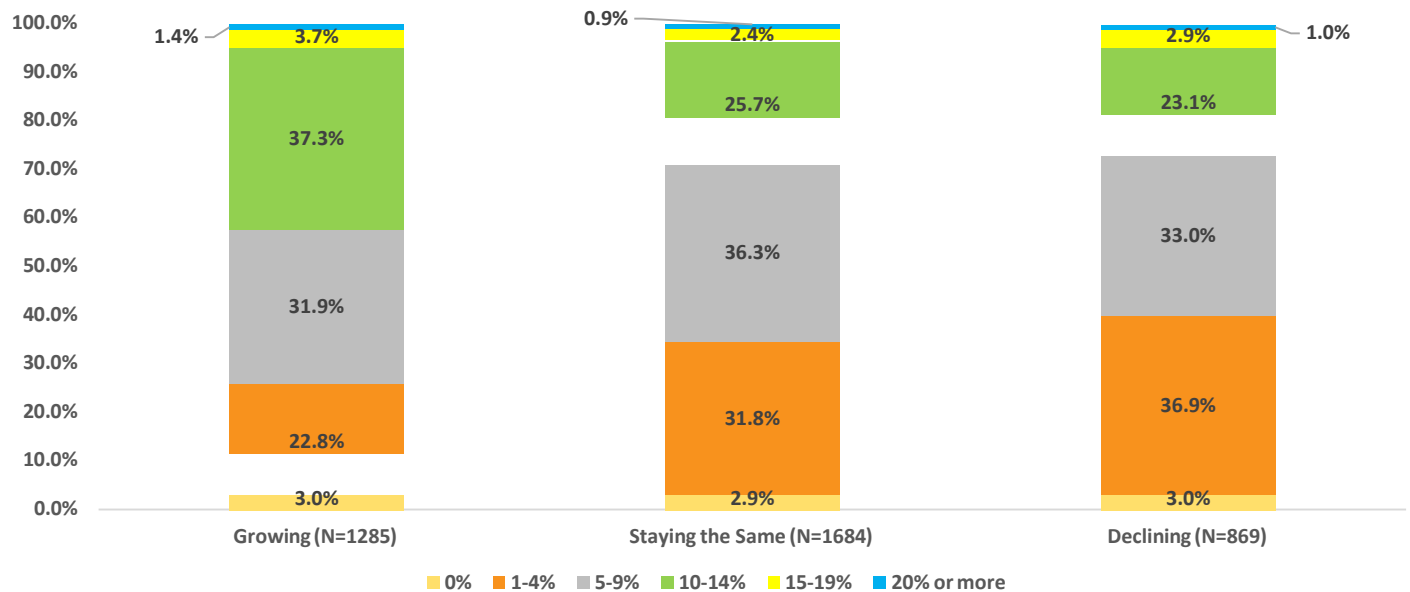
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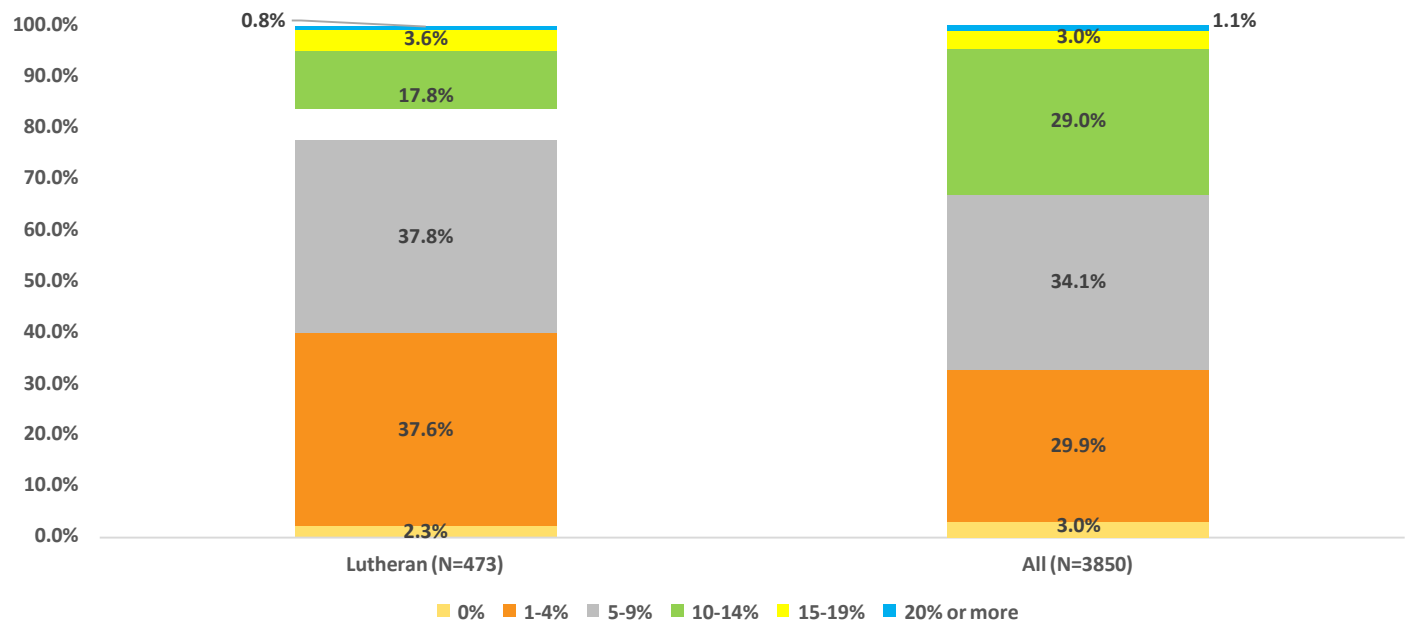
## Internal: Engaged Laity

Approximately what percentage of your household income do you give to your congregation? Growing vs. Declining



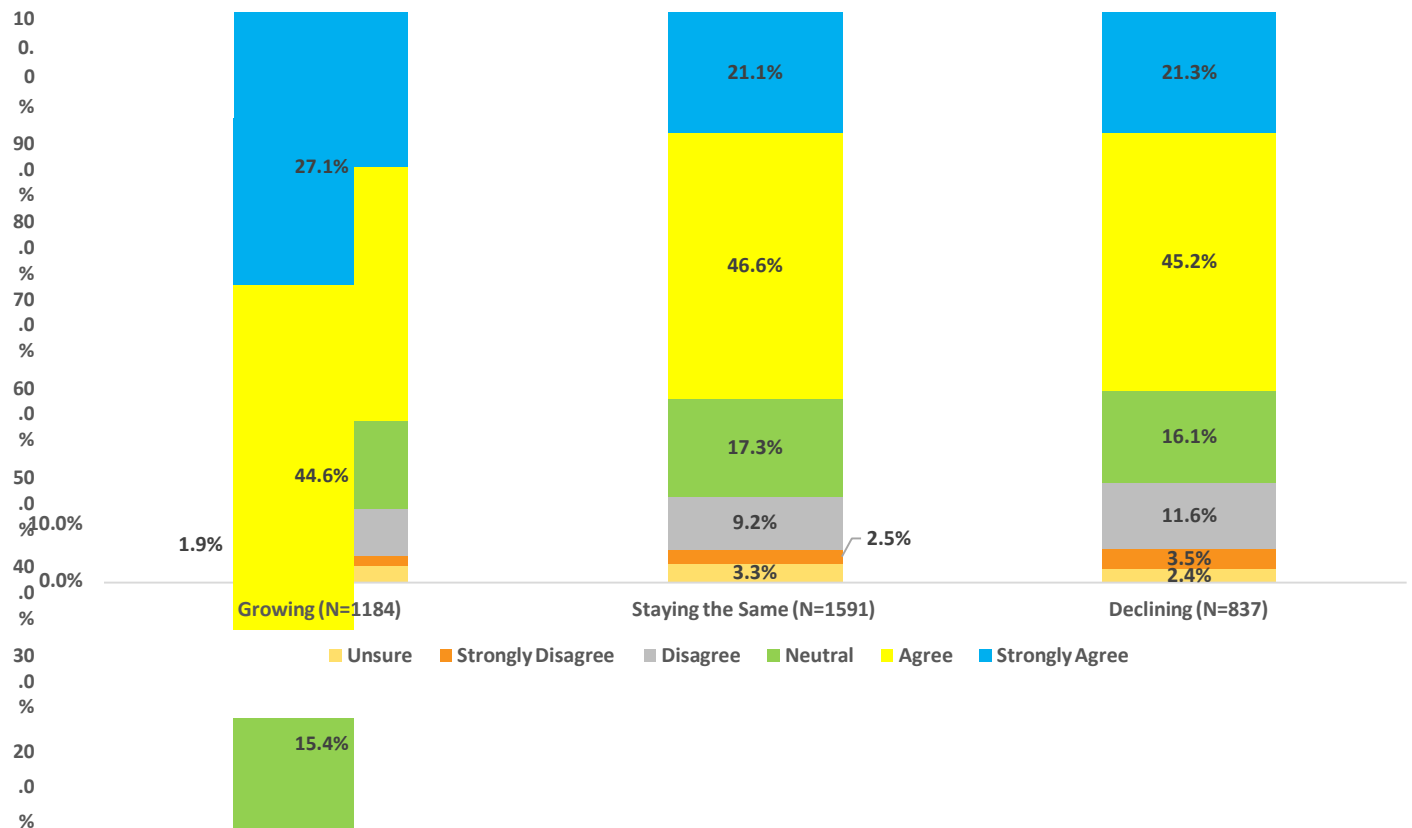
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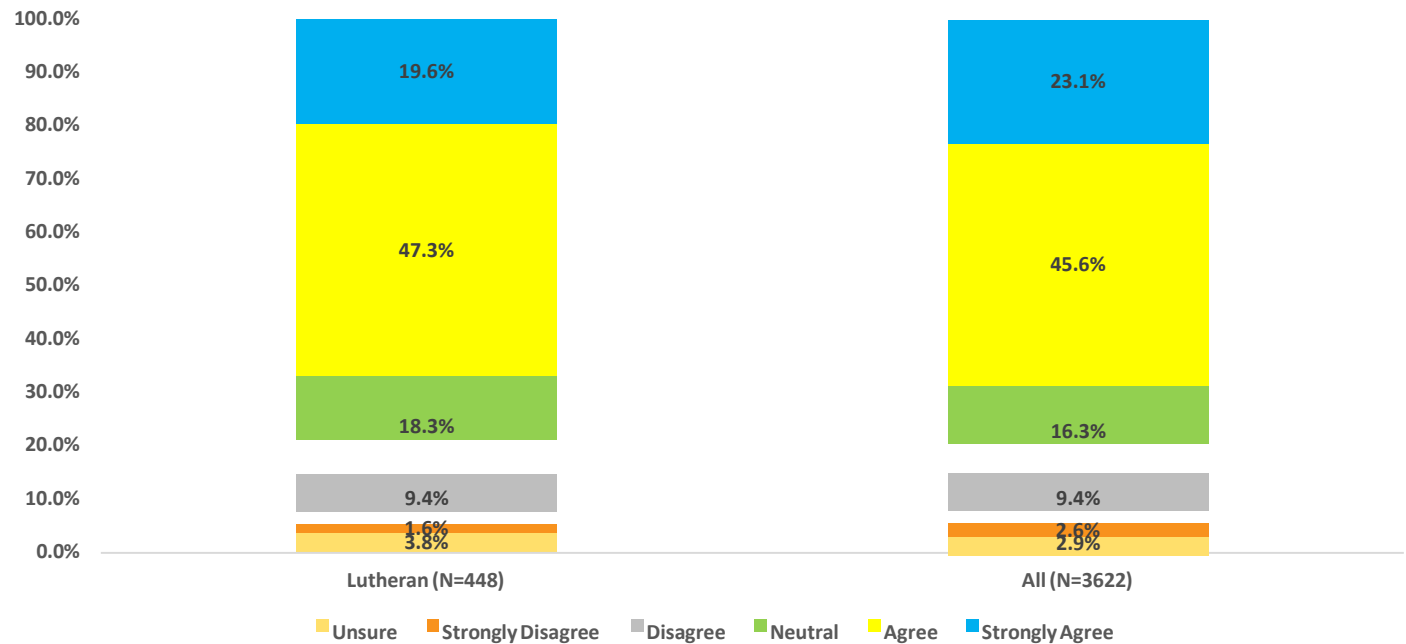
## Internal: Engaged Laity

I am serving my congregation according to my particular gifts – Growing vs. Declining



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## Internal: Hospitable Community

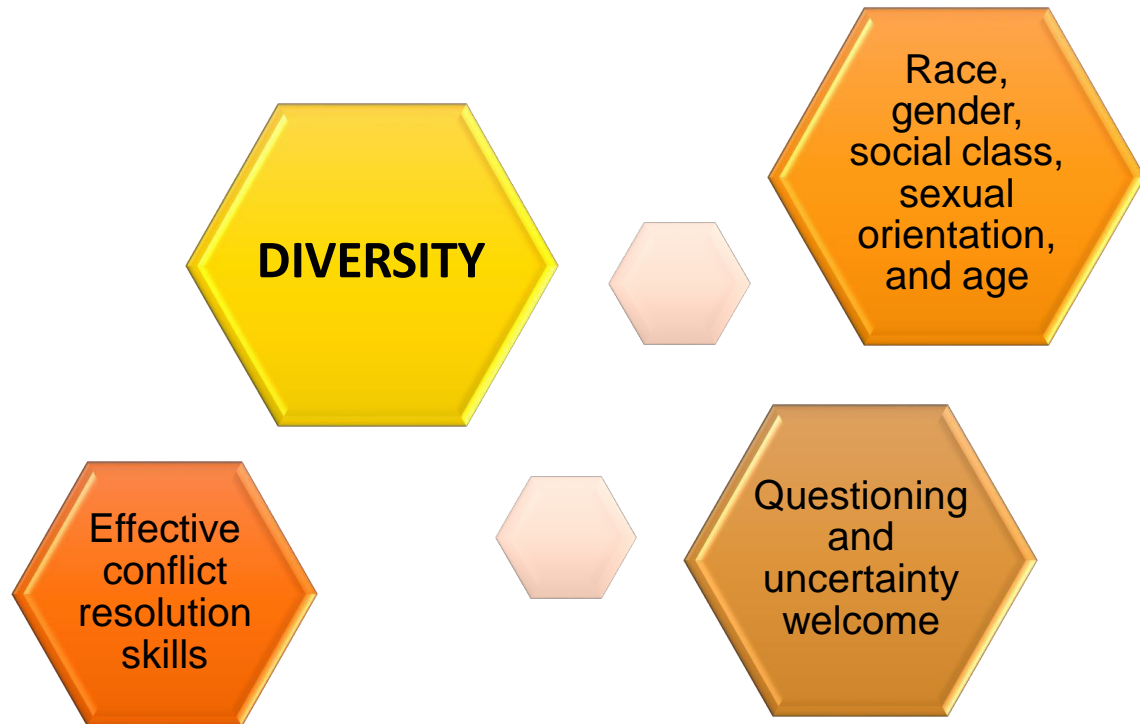


- People are loved and cared for, and seem to enjoy one another's company
- Clear processes for joining and remaining involved
- Pride in one's congregation



## Internal: Diversity

- How might desired diversity be reflected in all levels of your church's leadership and beyond?



## Outward: Neighbourhood Involvement

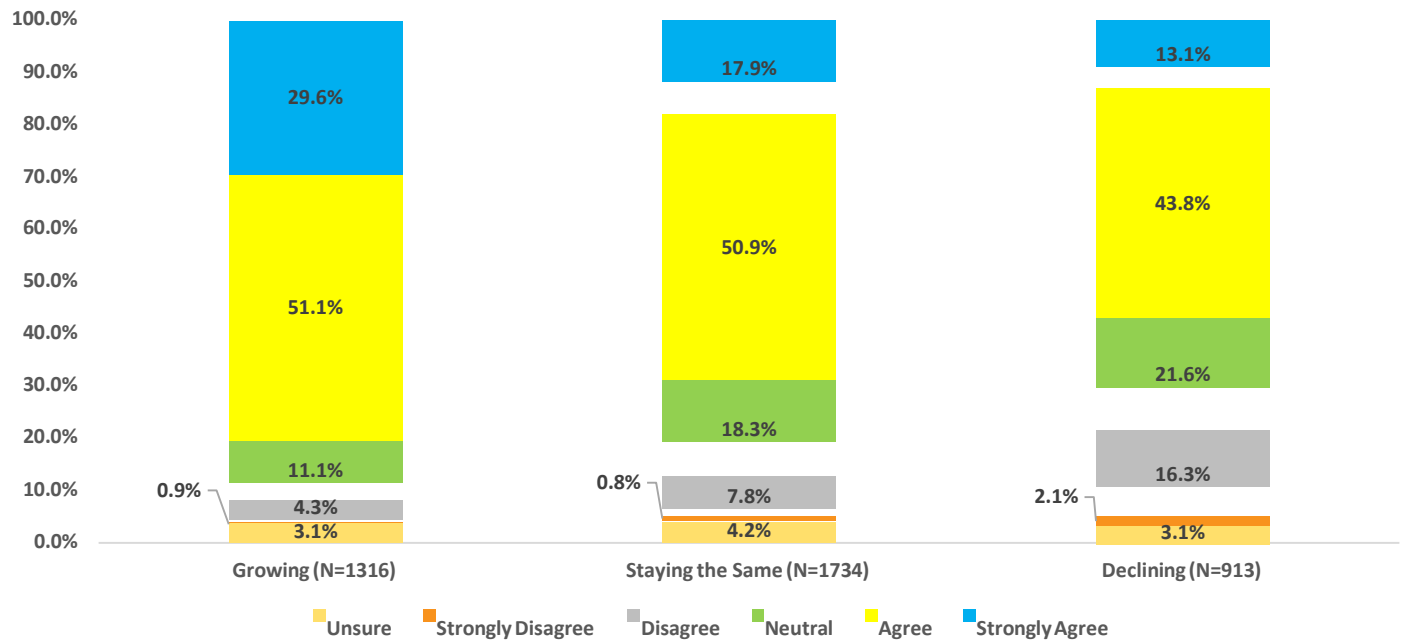
- “Incarnational presence” or “Being the hands and feet of Jesus”
  - **Would the surrounding community notice if your church was not there?**





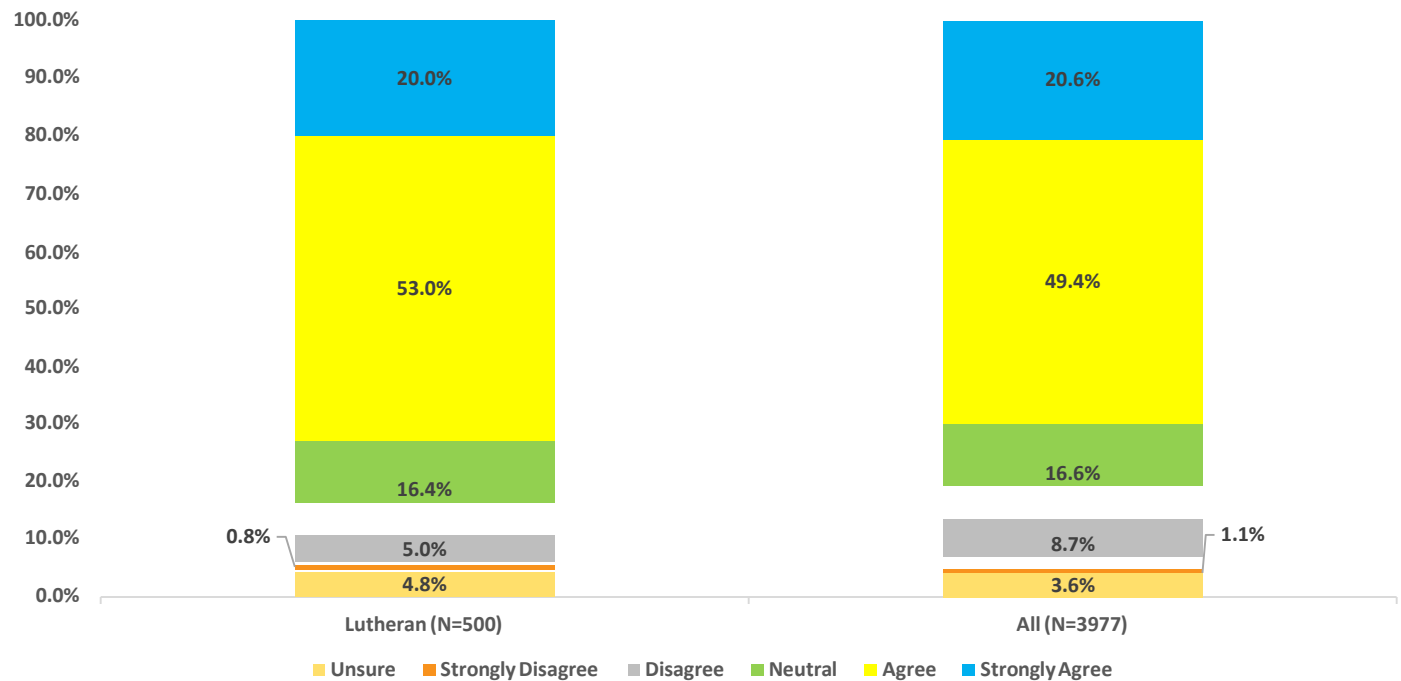
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Our congregation has an active presence in the wider community  
– Growing vs. Declining



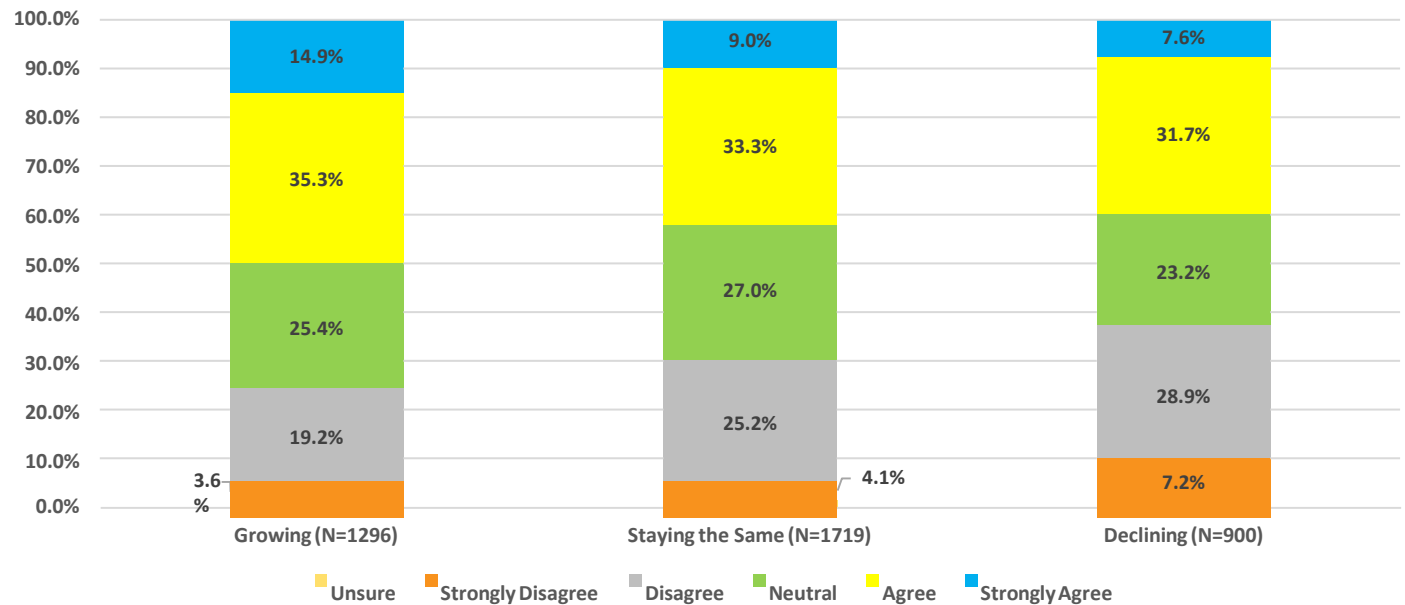
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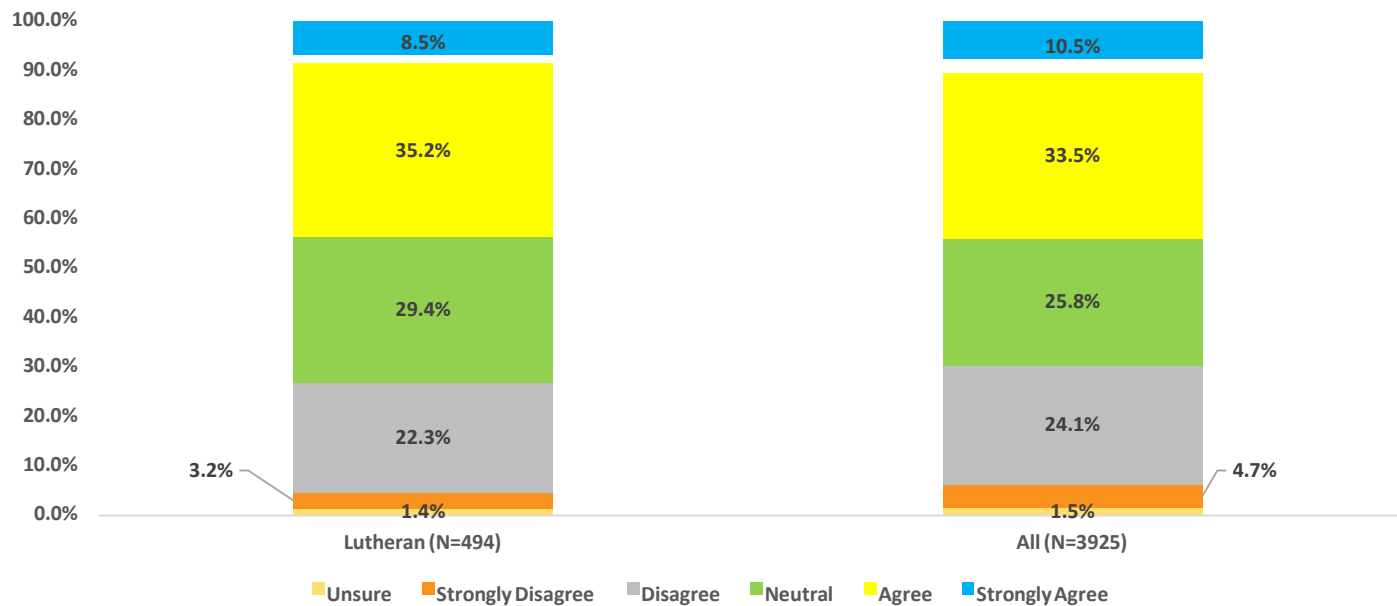
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I personally regularly take part in congregational activities that reach out to the wider community – Growing vs. Declining



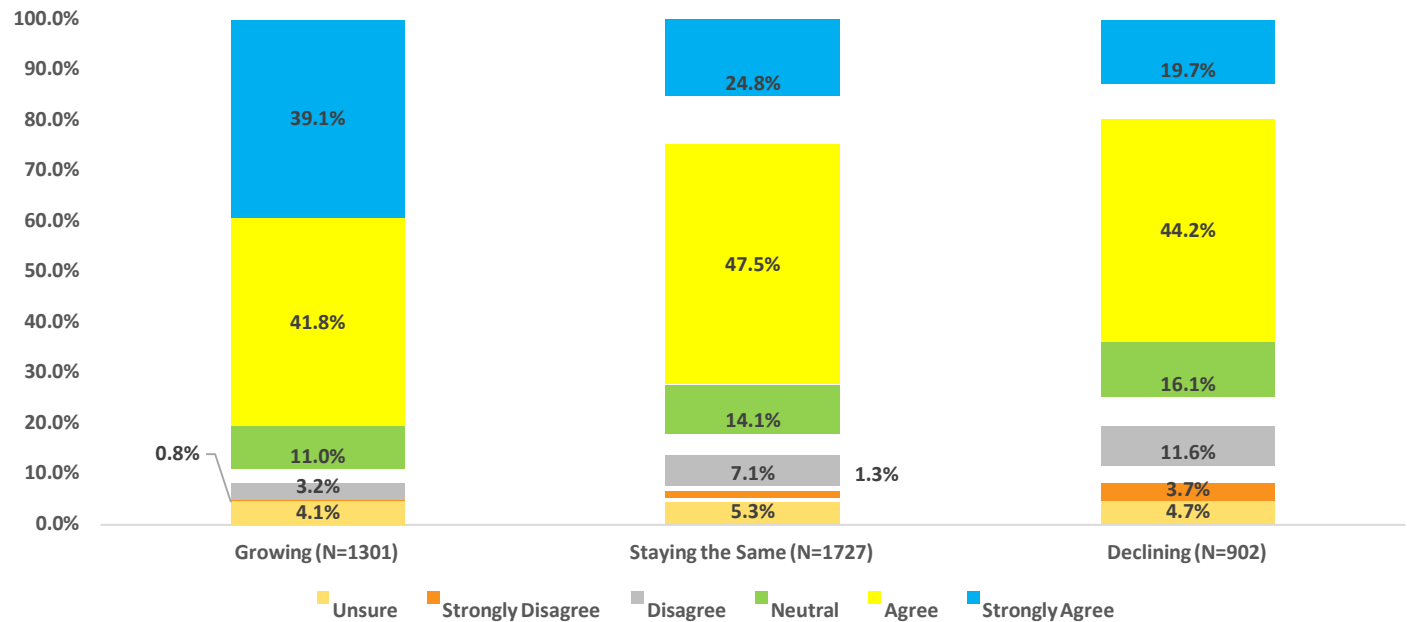
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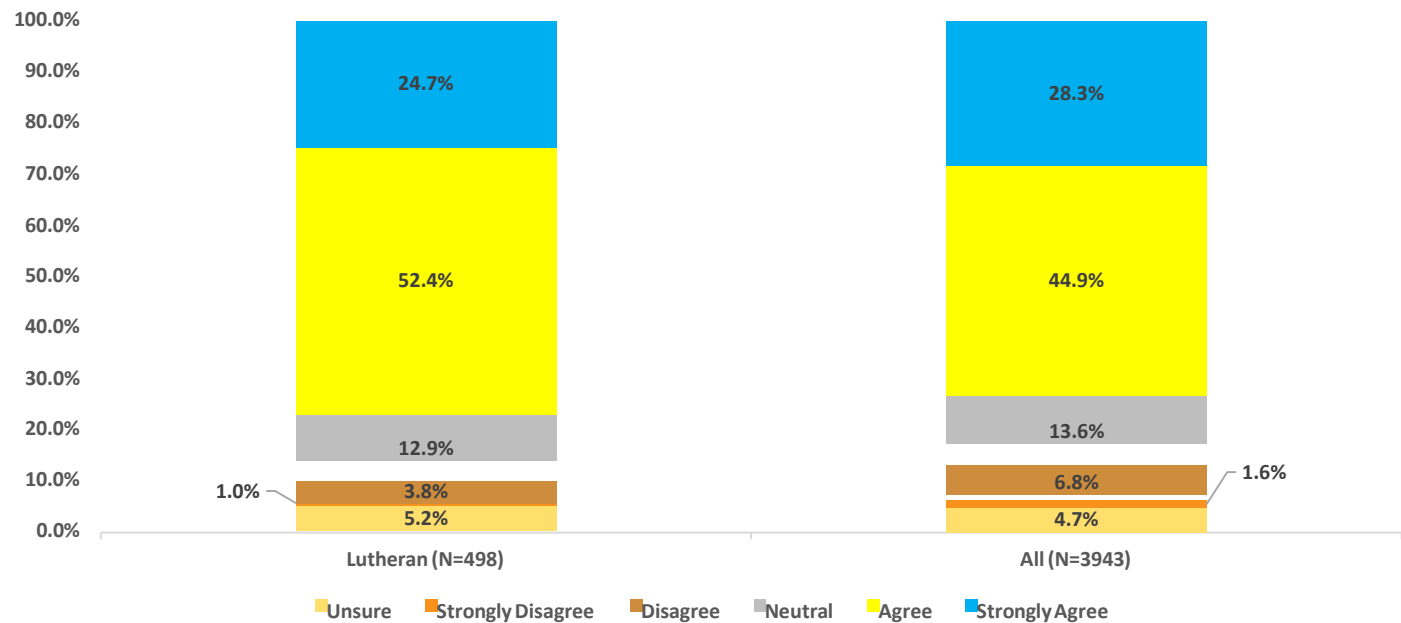
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The neighbourhood around our congregation building would notice if our congregation was no longer there – Growing vs. Declining



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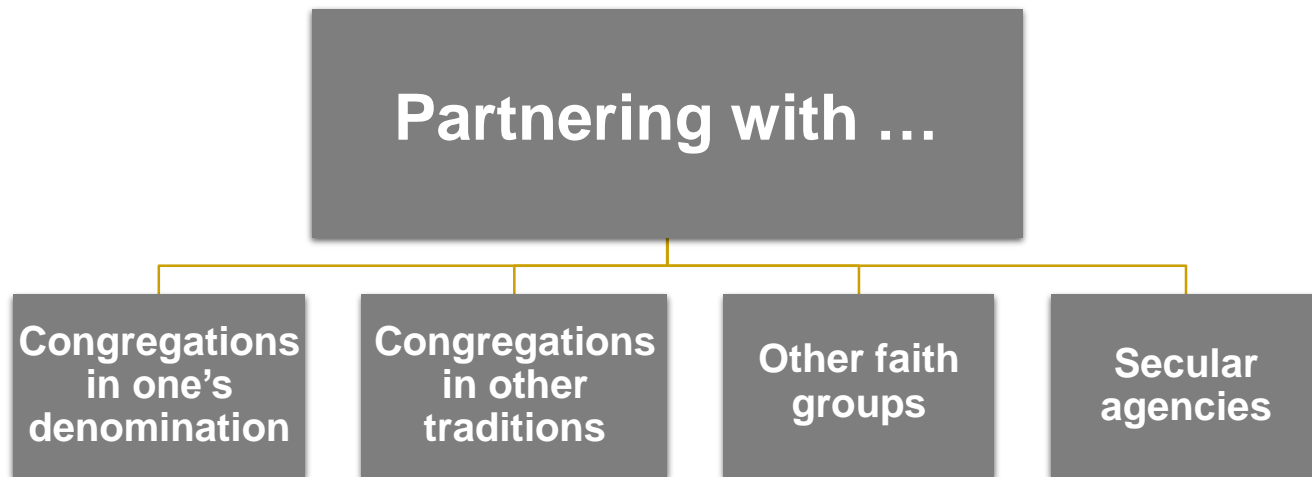


## Outward: Evangelism



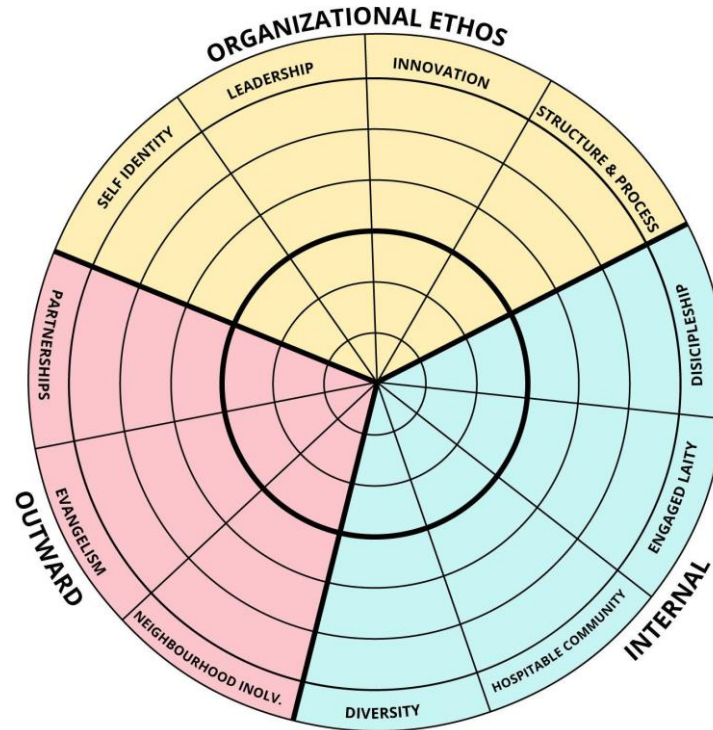
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## Outward: Partnerships





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