



Results
January 2017

This survey was open to submissions at USG from October through December, 2016. There were 68 completed surveys. Responses were recorded verbatim.

No effort is made in this report to summarize or condense the open-ended (text) responses. Counts, averages, and percentages are shown where applicable.

Respondents were asked to read the following instructions:

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This survey basically centers around one simple question: What are your spiritual beliefs?

Of course, our spiritual lives are often complicated, can be difficult to access, and may be changing all the time. Religious and spiritual terms mean different things to different people. So it's not only hard to answer questions about this topic; it is also hard to ask them.

But do your best to answer the questions below. Define terms as you will. Explore what you think about your own spiritual and religious life. We think you'll find the survey interesting and maybe even enjoyable. By all means, discuss it with someone! Have fun! (But please, one survey per person.)

Some of the questions ask you to place your answer on a scale and then explain why you chose that point on the scale. If an explanation comes to you easily, write a short answer. If not, just move on to the next item. Spend as much or as little time as you wish with each item.

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Questions 1 and 2 were paired:

1. If asked to label your spiritual experience or religion, you might select one or more labels. But if you were asked simply, "what is your religion?" and could use only one label, how are you most likely to answer?
2. Briefly, comment on the reason for your answer in the first question (and, if it was difficult to select only one label, say why it was difficult):

Answers:

<u>Question #1</u>	<u>Question #2</u>
Unitarian	Unitarianism is very broad and I can fit in wherever I'm comfortable
Humanist	When you tell someone: Humanist, they usually ask what the heck that is!
Depends on the context: UU - safest, then earth-based, then pagan, and Wiccan - most risky I have no "religion"	see #1 not difficult: religion is organized around dogma. I reject dogma. The spiritual is absent in dogma.
UU	it's the only one that fits best
It's complicated	I feel a profound mystery in life and creation. Traditional religious explanations of this mystery are myths with no facts but with essential truths. Scientific explanations of the mystery contain many facts but no truths. The mystery is still a mystery. I believe that the best way to deal with the mystery is to acknowledge and revere the mystery and express my own mystery through love, community and good works.
UU	I fully identify as UU now, but sometimes feel the need to also add that I'm an atheist.
Unitarian	I find the designation Unitarian Universalist cumbersome. UU is better but only UUs know what it means. I associate more closely with the "Unitarian" roots than Universalist origins.
Unitarian	After attending a UU church, I attended all others, found them not as compatible.
Unitarian Universalist	not difficult at all. I find my beliefs change over time and UU supports me in my search for truth and meaning, while providing a structure with rituals and values that build and support community.
none	I chose none because it's the clearest way to express my feelings without getting into an argument.
UU	I used to refer to myself as a secular humanist, but I came to realize atheism needs support. Nevertheless, UU is based on positive rather than negative principles, and has more potential for effecting beneficial results.
Unitarian Universalist	UU is the church I belong to, therefore my "religion." It does not indicate my beliefs, though.
Unitarian Universalist	"UU" is an accurate description of my spiritual & religious community; it offers great flexibility, and the term "UU" is often a fantastic seed for a more in-depth conversation.
Unitarian Universalist	I view Unitarian Universalism to be a "How to be a good person" church. I was raised on the 4-H pledge "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living..." and when I found UU, it seemed like their mission aligned with that pledge, and LOVE is everything, so yeah.
I have no religion	"UUs are unified by their shared search for spiritual growth" - from Wikipedia. I am not concerned with spiritual growth. It has no meaning for me.
UU	Unitarian Universalism gives me the flexibility of belief.
Agnostic	I would describe myself as being 90% Atheist and 10% Agnostic. I choose Agnostic because I am not 100% Atheist. I have doubts even about my doubts. If there is something other than what can be observed, my beliefs tend towards Spinoza's God, the "god" of Lao-tzu, a pantheistic world view as expressed by Einstein.
Unitarianism	I believe that one can think of God as a pursuit toward good. There is room for all to have their specific beliefs that lead to acceptance, fairness, compassion, etc. ...good. We need to bring good to the world (not wait or expect other "divine" forces).
Unitarian	This is how I have identified myself for the last 45 years!

Humanist	Although raised briefly as a Christian, the number one reason for my saying "Humanist" was because I saw traditional religions as "toxic." As I grew up and started to realize the crimes/murders/deaths committed in the name of organized religions, I just could not attach myself ... and the whole "Mary-Holy Ghost" thing was unbelievable to me by the age of 12.
Unitarian Universalist	It is the church community I identify with.
Unitarian Universalist	Because I identify fully with the 7 principles and I feel a part of my church family.
Unitarian Universalist	Not difficult, was raised Unitarian.
Difficult	
(Skeptically) spiritual	I do not believe in a personal supreme being directly shaping our lives, but I've seen the power of religious faith in Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Hindu friends and feel a spirit, a light, a force exists in some form.
Unitarian Universalism	The beliefs so describe my beliefs & the things that I want in a community.
Unitarian Universalist	I embrace the diversity and questioning of this religious faith. I consider myself a seeker of justice, compassion and love.
Agnostic	I have no firm clear belief in a particular faith, but believe there is something greater than me to connect to. My beliefs (as they are now, and they are ever-changing) are also eclectic, drawing from many spiritual traditions, so "Agnostic" is the simplest answer.
UU	The only place I've felt "at home."
Unitarian Universalist	This fits me better than all other labels - not hard.
Pagan	I seek to connect to the circle of life and death.
Unitarian Universalist	UUism is most in line with my <u>values</u> . Raised Catholic, I will always be Catholic to a certain extent, in a cultural sense not a religious sense.
I'm spiritual (from the European Protestant tradition, with a Buddhist-leaning practice) not religious Unitarian	Over the course of my lifetime, it's become quite a blend of influences...I hesitate to call this a religion despite being certain that <u>it is</u> spiritual!
New Thought	I resonate with universal spiritual principles and find more peace when I remember I'm connected to God all the time.
Mystic	A mystic who believes Enlightenment science can help us understand the Universe & our place in it. A mystic who believes that somehow it is love that powers the Universe.
That I am "All Faith" and believe in more than one religion.	It is difficult to explain that I came to a congregation (USG) that doesn't have any certain faith, all are welcome, and I am not a label.
"Non-religious" or "love" is my "religion"	I don't particularly prefer these types of labels because I consider them to be divisive and many times discriminatory. Personally, I gather (and benefit) from all practices.
Unitarian	difficult - because in my heart, I still retain Protestant mythology
Unitarian Universalist	I don't know many other religions, and as of right now, this is how I define myself.
I don't really have one.	No reason.
No religion (atheist)	I do not believe that there is a god.
Atheist	I don't believe in putting blind faith into things.
agnostic	I am not sure there is a higher being that looks over our sins but I do believe there is something up there.
Unitarian Universalist	Because that's what I've been my whole life and that's what makes sense to me.
atheist	broad, and easily understood
Unitarian Universalist	This is the only church I go to and only religion
Hindu	Explanation of existence and a path to enlightenment
Unitarian Universalism	I have never been another religion. I don't have spiritual practices outside of UUism. No other religion resonates.
Unitarian Universalist	It wasn't difficult. I basically grew up in a church with all kinds of people and that have different beliefs
Unitarian Universalist	This is the church I belong to.
humanist	
Optimistic Agnostic UU	I draw from many traditions including Buddhism, Native American, Women's Spirituality and earth-based traditions. I was raised Methodist and am sure I have been influenced by that. Many

	of my professional mentors are Jewish and have taught me many important lessons. Yet I don't think any of these have the whole picture. UU allows me to be in the unknown and to be OK with that.
Unitarian Universalist	not difficult. The seven principles resonate with my values and how I live my life.
Unitarian Universalist	I feel very connected to what USG stands for, therefore when asked I refer to UU as my religion.
Unitarian	I was raised Unitarian and I am glad I was. RE and LRY (youth group) was very meaningful. My family's social activism shaped me. I would have liked to use more than one word.
connection to something larger than myself	
Unitarian Universalist	Religion is "what binds us together." In the case of U-Uism, what binds us together is our individual search for truth and meaning - we are searching individually but together and respecting our differences.
Unitarian	That best describes my affiliation and package of beliefs
Unitarian Universalist	I believe in the principles, I believe in the process. Both have allowed me to connect with what is inside and connect with others in relationship. Through connection experience power of love and hope.
Unitarian Universalist	I never identified with any religious tradition before attending and later Joining USG. I feel a part of the USG community and identify with the 7 principles.
Unitarian Buddhist or Buddhatarian	I combine UU & Buddhism ____ UU's providing a platform for social justice activities and a community of like-minded people with whom I can share in Sunday services & other meaningful ways. My Buddhist practice compliments my UUism & is also a separate forum.
Unitarian Universalist	because I signed the book and attend USG regularly
Unitarian Universalist	We celebrate the holidays of Christianity & Judaism but I recognize myself as a UU
Unitarian	I attend services here - my beliefs are inclusive of other religions - and is humanistic
Unitarian Universalist	It's the faith I now identify with.
all-encompassing	I grew up Catholic, re-baptized Methodist at age 13, married a Christian Scientist, did not practice after divorce, married an Episcopalian but then realized I did not believe in the "Easter Story" resurrection, the trinity/son of God.

3. What spiritual, religious, or non-religious perspective(s) best describe(s) you at this point in time? *(please check all that apply):*

Counts are in parentheses (because this was "check all," percents do not apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _a Humanist (40) | <input type="checkbox"/> _g Earth Honoring (19) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _b Naturalist (20) | <input type="checkbox"/> _h Atheist(ic) (18) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _c Christian (8) | <input type="checkbox"/> _i Agnostic (23) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _d Jewish (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> _j Undecided (8) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _e Buddhist (9) | <input type="checkbox"/> _k Other (16) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _f Muslim (1) | <i>(please specify)</i> _____ |

For the last option above, specified were:

Deist, Transcendentalist	person & I believe in a higher	of these, but that does not
Hindu	power.	mean I belong to the label.
pantheism	pantheistic, agnostic, deism	Unitarian Universalist
mindfulness practices	perhaps humanist	Unitarian Universalist
Mystic	These labels are hard to use since	UU
New age spirituality	they mean different things to	UU
New Thought	different people. To me UU	UU - primary
None of these labels apply - I consider myself a very spiritual	allows use of elements from all	Wiccan

4. If you had a religious upbringing, what was it called? _____

Counts (and percents, based on 55 answers):

11 Catholic (20%)	4 Presbyterian (7%)	1 Dutch Reform (2%)	1 Unitarian/Jewish (2%)
10 Unitarian (18%)	3 Christian (5.5%)	1 Maronite Catholic & Roman Catholic (2%)	1 very traditional (2%)
5 Episcopalian (9%)	3 Congregational (5.5%)	1 Protestantism (2%)	
5 Jewish (9%)	2 Quakerism (4%)	1 Ukrainian Catholic (2%)	
5 Methodist (9%)	1 AME Baptist (2%)		

5. Would you say that the religion you were raised in still informs or affects your spiritual perspective?

(check one)

- ₁ Very much so (18%)
- ₂ Sometimes, but not primarily (30%)
- ₃ Not very much (37%)
- ₄ Not at all (16%)

Average answer above was 2.50.

Answers, paired with answer to #4:

AME Baptist	4	Dutch Reform	4	Methodist	4	Unitarian	1
Catholic	4	Episcopalian	3	Methodist	3	Unitarian	1
Catholic	3	Episcopalian	3	Methodist	2	Unitarian	1
Catholic	3	Episcopalian	3	Methodist	2	Unitarian	1
Catholic	3	Episcopalian	2	Presbyterian	2	Unitarian/Jewish	2
Catholic	3	Episcopalian	4	Presbyterian	3	UU	2
Catholic	1	I was raised as a UU	2	Presbyterian	1	UU	1
Catholic/Christian	2	Jewish	3	Presbyterian	2	UU	2
Catholicism	2	Jewish	3	Protestantism	3	UU	2
Christian	3	Jewish	2	Quakerism	2	UUism	1
Christian	2	Jewish	3	Quakerism & humanism	2	very traditional	3
Christian	2	Jewish	4	Roman Catholic	3		
Congregationalist	2	Maronite Catholic &		Roman Catholic	4		
Congregationalist	4	Roman Catholic	2	Roman Catholic	3		
Congregationalist	2	Methodist	4	Ukrainian Catholic	4		

6. Do you think the perspective(s) you selected in Question #3 make a difference in your life in any way?

Counts:

₁ Yes (61, 91%)

₂ No (6, 9%)

If you answered yes, please give a (short) answer as to how the perspective(s) make a difference in your life:

Answers were:

more aware of the environment

lifestyle choices to live more lightly on the planet; ways to listen for guidance/inspiration; deepest experiences in retreats and solar holiday rituals

I believe in the 7 UU Principles, which each of the [principals checked in #3] addresses.

Humanist makes me hopeful, because it is based on what people can produce and on evidence; agnostic makes me open to new experience and knowledge, because I don't know everything

The human expressions of mercy, pity, peace & love are where god exists (see Wm. Blake). Nature is the greatest expression of the mystery of life and creation. The "Christian" teachings of Jesus to love god, love self, love your neighbor, love your enemy, don't judge & do good works are the instruction manual for a good life & are the underpinnings of UU principals and beliefs.

The many approaches to faith are rewarding to me. Rationally and in "faith" I have difficulty with a divine Jesus.

I can now enjoy being old not fear living a long life.

I am not afraid to ask questions, challenge my beliefs and others', seek truth, wonder at the mysteries science cannot explain and not feel pressured to resort to a religious belief system to explain what might not yet have an explanation.

I value skepticism and beliefs based on evidence and proofs.

I don't look for authoritarian or mysterious sources of knowledge/wisdom/meaning.

I strive to derive meaning & value in life from the here & now, without appealing to God or an afterlife. Morality & ethics can be derived from logic & reason alone; God is not necessary.

Those perspectives inform my personal search for truth, meaning, spirituality, and religion. Each of those perspectives - including the ones I didn't check - represents a rich tradition of truth and meaning (etc.) from which I am free to explore.

The majority of my spiritual experiences revolve around nature/seasons. This is both a need and an escape. I find it easier to cultivate wonder/awe when spending time in nature/under the sky. It keeps me centered and optimistic. I get good energy from nature, or people in nature.

I do not believe in god. I value all living things and respect all living things as much as I can. I feel we were formed by natural laws (naturalistic).

I think anyone's belief system will have an effect on their behavior. I can't see how a nihilist could behave just like a theist.

More from a perspective of defining what I do not believe - verbatim based group think perspective.

These perspectives guide my behavior as much as possible - my view of the world.

It's just an expression of my belief system. I believe we are all "gods" - I believe we are formed in the image of some greater force - but not necessarily an old man sitting in the clouds with his favorite angels. And, since we are all made in the image of our "creator" (a cloud of gas?) we are within us the powers inherent to our creator.

1. [Humanist] makes me care about quality of life on earth for myself & others. 2. [Earth Honoring] gives guidelines for the choices we make. 3. [Undecided] makes room for future insights.

I enjoy celebrating seasons with the Earth Honoring traditions group because the changing daylight hours affect me year-round and because I find it spiritual and meaningful.

The perspectives question made a difference in my life because I can learn now to open myself to things in life and be more positive and not hold in my emotions.

I feel a connection with and a responsibility to other people and beings.

Challenges me to live a caring and giving life. "What would Jesus do?" as the operative example.

Humanism leaves me open, questioning, thoughtful and caring about justice for humanity. Buddhism provides a meditative practice and perspective that leaves me less attached to mind, body, ego, and instead aware of my deep connectedness to all beings. It also provides practice around love and peace, and a means by which I can send it to myself and others beings. Agnosticism gives

me flexibility to tie Buddhist beliefs about Awareness and Connectedness to Neo-Christian/New Age beliefs of reincarnation and the soul choosing its life. It also gives me freedom to wonder.

Makes me more compassionate

I am always looking for the face of God in all different places.

It connects me to the circle of life on this planet.

I still value tradition, ritual, community, prayer and a search for meaning.

These perspectives make me feel more self-aware, grounded and connected to a larger Life Force.

It allows me to hope for something but not depend on it; that allows me to focus on what I can give now in the present.

combo of my heritage and my connection to spirituality

These portray my resources where I go to understand, where I find fellow travelers.

Being a Christian was instilled in me from my late uncle and late aunt, who always taught me to be kind, help others in need, caring, all about family, turn the other cheek, and what would Jesus do.

I appreciate the meditative (meditation) and practice of "presence" Buddhism offers. With the little I know about Humanism, it's way of interpreting everyday life is digestible, in addition to their values in human empowerment; the true message of love professed by Jesus in Christianity is what I believe to be the greatest human power. Something I strive to live by.

Short?! My mom had strong religious beliefs & I think my folks raised me with a good moral compass. I think they were partially informed by their religions & so on down to me. My belief that life is determined more by chance & will than by a divine being is what my rational self believes. Makes me a little sad. I don't know how else that has made a difference in my life, except to make me choose Unitarianism.

I'm not very religious, and if I was in a stricter religion, it would affect my everyday life.

It didn't

It is my life philosophy, and influences most of my decisions.

Because it does affect my decisions to a certain extent

I think I am open & interested to what other people think and believe.

It helps me understand that all religions are basically the same but people have different beliefs about their religion.

I still believe in things I was taught when I was young but love more and more different religions and thoughts.

Peace and nonviolence

I draw from many traditions including Buddhism, Native American, Women's Spirituality and earth-based traditions. I was raised Methodist and am sure I have been influenced by that. Many of my professional mentors are Jewish and have taught me many important lessons. Yet I don't think any of these have the whole picture. UU allows me to be in the unknown and to be OK with that.

My deep love of a wide range of music comes from that tradition.

I am discovering more about myself as I get older, and that many of my beliefs can be defined on some of these perspectives.

I have a strong identity with the teachings of Jesus. He was a revolutionary and an advocate for the poor. I like the moral teachings. I also am strongly influenced by nature and by people. There are many Jewish traditions I love. The combination is beautiful.

Helps things make sense; gives me serenity and hope.

I believe we all make the meaning in our own lives, so I try to live meaningfully - being of service, creating family rituals, appreciating nature, being a good friend.

I grew up and remain an ardent labor Zionist. Earth honoring inflects eco-views, sustainability and many other aspects of belief and action.

I feel open to human connection, awareness of power of love.

I feel a lot of humility in assessing others' beliefs, and a lot of uncertainty when asked to state my own.

Meditation practice & study of Buddhist teachings provide daily reminders of the impermanence of all existence and help me accept life as it is.

focus on helping people

I am sensitive to Jewish and minority issues and prejudice when it occurs.

It frees me from trying to fit what I see into what I believe.

I believe in the power and goodness of people. And while I am not that familiar with humanism, I do feel that is the best fit. (Have only come to this belief in last 6 years.)

7. To what extent would you say you believe in god/higher power/divinity? (please circle a number)

I do not believe in such a thing			Not sure/Undecided			I strongly believe in such a thing
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Average on the scale was 3.90.

Please explain why you placed your answer where you did on the scale above:

Answers, paired with response on the scale above:

- 1 There is no god on a cloud.
- 1 I consider myself an atheist.
- 1 I believe in nature, in science
- 1 Because I lack a belief in any of the specific deities or the general concept of a higher power. I feel that all evidence of discussion around this topic that I've researched or been presented to, has so far been unconvincing.
- 1 Because I do not believe in such a thing - I feel it is ridiculous to believe in something like that without any evidence.
- 1 I have never seen evidence for a god; therefore, I do not believe in god.
- 1 I simply don't believe in a divine power governing the universe. I believe in science, kindness, the power of the human imagination, and the fact that there is no plan.
- 1 I don't believe in such a thing.
- 1 I don't believe in a higher power because it has not been proven and substantial evidence has not been given.
- 1 I see no evidence
- 1 Of course, we cannot "know" with certainty, but on the available evidence, I do not believe in such a thing.
- 2 Not sure. It has little impact on my thinking.
- 2 At this point in my life, I think it is impossible to know with any degree of certainty whether there is a God, an afterlife or anything supernatural.
- 2 I think the concept of a god/gods is a human-created idea ... but I feel it reflects something unknowable but powerful.
- 2 I do not believe there is a god, but there is still the possibility that some form of higher power could exist.
- 2 because I don't really believe, but there's a little to suggest otherwise
- 2 unlikely
- 2 Did not grow up with experience of higher power; never had the language
- 2 I don't believe in a "higher power," but can label the mystery of life "god."
- 2 I just don't see how there could be a God because there is so much evidence against it.
- 3 I do not believe in an anthropomorphic God, but I wonder there might be some sort of divinity that binds all living things.
- 3 After losing someone important to me, I could feel the energy in her room change like something.
- 3 I have abandoned belief in a supreme being but am open to the existence of a spirit world.
- 3 I believe in light and darkness and a balance between both
- 3 I mainly believe in faith, not myths.
- 3 Not sure how I chose the exact number - I lean against such belief but am attached to my uncertainty about this (& many other things).
- 4 I hope, but there is no way to know and useless to spend resources on the question.
- 4 I am still undecided.
- 4 I still pray and believe there is value in that, but it seems most of what makes a difference is in nature and how people connect with and treat each other.
- 4 I want to believe. I do believe there is something larger than myself.
- 4 no proof, but evidence
- 4 I believe in love of people. But not sure where that love comes from or if it should be with a capital L. Is it from a higher power? Don't know yet.
- 5 I can't make a tree. I can't make the sun, moon & stars shine. I can't make the wind blow, the rain fall or my granddaughter behave. Something greater than me has done all of that. (Well, maybe not the grand daughter behave

part.)

- 5 I haven't been "touched" by "god." Still I believe in a power greater than myself.
- 5 "God/higher power/divinity still evokes, for me, the idea of a sentient "person-like" being who takes part in or rules my life. I don't believe in that. I do believe in Energy/Spirit/Connectedness ("The Great Mystery" fits well for me) through which we can experience awe and spirit, and to which we can connect as a means of enriching and guiding our paths.
- 5 I think that there is something greater than us but I'm not very sure.
- 5 I think there's something but I am unable to define it and don't feel the need to.
- 5 I think there is another explanation for the forces of nature and the earth as well as human interactions.
- 5 Being raised Catholic, I was taught there was a higher power. I do not believe in the Catholic Church's version of this, but have not ruled out the possibility of something "higher" than us.
- 5 I feel human beings are only a small part of a huge universe. Although I do not believe in a personal god who can intervene in personal affairs, I do feel a stronger and different force than human beings.
- 5 I believe God appears in us strongly.
- 5.5 I believe in the powers of "the universe" I guess. I'd be open to a polytheistic explanation too...with one god/goddess ruling the sun, the ocean, etc. ...but that sounds too "man made." I appreciate the mystery of not knowing.
- 6 My higher power is my better/more rational self. Obviously, that's real to me.
- 6 I believe that the existence of life (or the universe generally) is more than the sum of its parts. The mystery of creation, of consciousness, of life & death is certainly representative of something greater than I can explain or understand.
- 6 God as a force of good.
- 6 I believe in a universal force that is benign and I believe that you get back what you put out - with thought, energy and actions.
- 6 Because I believe if I pray to god now he will answer my prayers and guide me the best way he can.
- 6 It doesn't start or end with human existence; synchronicity speaks to a higher power; mystery and unanswerable questions also attest to a higher power.
- 6 I consider this the Divine Force within all of us.
- 6 Because I believe there is a greater force(s) that makes up this universe which we, as humans, are also a part of. Why 6 and not 7? Just leaving room for human doubt.
- 7 Direct experience of wisdom beyond my mental ability
- 7 Given the complexity of the natural world, of nature & humans - there must be something; what that is, I do not know.
- 7 Because no other religion/faith explains to me where we came from ... how did we get here?
- 7 I am always looking for the face of God in all different places.
- 7 My concept of a higher power is very important to my daily life.
- 7 I believe God is a shorthand notion for much that we don't understand.
- 7 Belief is the beginning of growth.
- 7 I might not believe as I did earlier but I do believe in a higher power.
- 7 I believe in an "intelligent" driving force in the universe. Joseph Campbell says he pities those who live without any "invisible means of support."
I think there is a force for good in the world.

8. If you answered FIVE OR HIGHER in the previous question, to what extent do you believe god/higher power/divinity is *supernatural*, that is, that it exists apart from our usual experience and the natural world?
(please circle a number)

I accept or lean toward its having the same qualities of the natural world (not at all supernatural)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I accept or lean toward its being very different from the natural world we experience (very supernatural)
		---		Not sure		---		

Average on the scale was 3.53.

Why did you place your answer where you did on the scale above?

Answers, paired with response on the scale above:

- 1 I have faith in scientific reasoning.
- 1 I believe that our everyday world is suffused with a higher power - they are one & the same.
- 1 I have abandoned belief in a supreme being but am open to the existence of a spirit world.
- 1 I believe God is all there is and all is God, including all of us. Because we have free will, we sometimes hold ourselves separate & create messed up stuff.
- 1 I think that there is something bigger than us but it is very human.
- 1 God is part of all our lives.
- 1 I think ultimately there is a scientific basis
- 2 My higher power is my better/more rational self
- 2 "God" is in the details, not separate: present in nature; present in the cosmos; present in me & everyone else; expressed fully through love.
- 2 The trick here is the phrase "our usual experience." I believe that we are always immersed in the great mystery I described, but most of the time we don't consciously experience/notice that fact.
- 2 It is a constant part of our everyday life, we just need to find our ways to tune into it.
- 2 I think of it as sort of energy in the universe, part of everything & everyone.
- 3 Just because we can't see it doesn't mean it's not natural - consider microscopic organisms, which certainly existed before we could see them and we could always see their effects
- 3 I have a sense that the natural order of life on our planet rules. Like Native American faith.
- 3 I feel humans are not the ultimate power. We are part of a larger reality.
- 4 Because I'm not sure. Sometimes, I think both 1 and 7.
- 4 I think this Great Mystery is accessible in all things at all times (though we may have trouble connecting to it), but it is also greater than the world we typically perceive.
- 4 Again, I hope.
- 4 I have not achieved a mental capacity to determine this perceptually. What I feel is that god/higherpower/universe/greater force/all being is both.
- 5 I think just like there are astrophysics that are different from Earth physics, there could be a power that responds somewhat differently than earthly powers. But I believe the law of attraction works with almost every thing.
- 5 I feel if something is a higher power, it would be something different from what I could comprehend.
- 5.5 There's something definitely "other worldly" but interacts w/us/fate/life daily, creating and changing the world we experience.
- 6 Because of miracles and synchronicity
- 7 Because there is so much we do not understand about life.
- 7 Because I believe if I pray to god now he will answer my prayers and guide me the best way he can.
- 7 I believe god/my higher power is something that cannot be understood/explained through our experience of the natural world.
- 7 See explanation in #7 above. I do not subscribe to an "individual" god who intervenes in personal lives.
I think this is an energy.
I am still exploring how I feel/exactly what I believe. Only rejected traditional beliefs about 6 years ago, then came to USG. I am a work in progress.

9. If you answered FIVE OR HIGHER in Question #7, to what extent do you believe that god/higher power/divinity hears, understands, and responds to prayer? (*please circle a number*)

I do not believe this happens	---	Not sure	---	I believe strongly that this happens
1 2	3	4	5	6 7

Average on the scale was 4.00.

Though the survey did not ask, many respondents supplied a justification for their answer on the scale above. Answers, paired with response, were:

- 1 God no!
- 1 I believe that prayer changes us but not through a higher power.
- 2 I don't believe god responds to prayer, but I have experienced answered prayers. I can't explain why!
- 3 I don't think the power is conscious of us. I just think there's sort of a magnetic pull - so what we pray about gets pulled toward us.
- 3 I do not think there is a personal response to prayer, but I think prayer matters. Prayer focuses on needs and on feelings and on desire to help.
- 4 I think prayer is a means to focus our thoughts toward good, acceptance, peace, etc. I don't know "what" responds to prayer - which does not mean that prayer doesn't have a place/purpose.
- 4 I have not experienced a clear example of prayer being answered. Prayer is probably good for the person saying the prayer.
- 4 I do not think it, like a person, responds. But I think it IS Love and Compassion, and so is worth praying to/reaching out to. I don't believe it grants wishes or prayers.
- 5 The "hears, understands, responds" language is more anthropomorphic than I am comfortable with. I think prayer can change things but not because an entity has heard and understood.
- 5 The human mind is extremely powerful as is the collective experience.
- 6 I believe that prayer is a beautiful practice in concentration. Prayer enables us to distill our spiritual search into terms we ourselves can articulate & understand. We are the ones listening & responding to our own prayers.
- 6 It's not so much a separate power understanding prayer; it's an alignment between the self and the Life Force that runs through all beings created through meditation/prayer.
- 6 Although I practice affirmative prayer, not so much beseeching prayer, & I don't define "respond" like "here's your new car" etc.
- 6 But it is more of an energetic interaction going on between "us" and all, (god), which is actually just one.
- 7 Understands/ doesn't necessarily respond

10. There is an expression – often said jokingly – that Unitarian Universalists are concerned with life *before* death. Would you say you believe that there is an afterlife? (*please circle a number*)

I don't believe in this	---	I'm undecided	---	I definitely believe in an afterlife
1 2	3	4	5	6 7

Average on the scale was 3.54.

Though the survey did not ask, many respondents supplied a justification for their answer on the scale above. Answers, paired with response, were:

- 2 I have an instinctive or gut feeling that there isn't, but I'm aware I can't actually know such a thing. I'd find it a lot more interesting to think that there IS some sort of afterlife.
- 3 not for the individual, really
- 4 If anything, I appreciate the "recycling" of life. As in the parable "The Egg."
- 4 One idea I have is that our souls feel the pain we've caused others first and then the joy, and then the souls feel

13. If you answered FOUR OR HIGHER in the previous question, what (or where) do you think the source of this sacredness is? (*check all that apply*)

Counts in parentheses:

- (45) _a In everyday things and actions
- (15) _b In something supernatural, apart from everyday things and actions
- (42) _c Inside my self
- (9) _d I don't really know
- (21) _e Something or somewhere else (*please specify*) _____

For the last option above, specified were:

also, grander forces outside of my (our) control or design.	in groups of people and in nature	On the water! In mountains!
at USG	in nature, in being in community, in being of service	other people
Beauty of nature; the sky, stars, wind; past history of earth; philosophers; other people including family and ancestors	in other people & my genuine experiences with them.	people's actions/thoughts
church	In others (who are just the same as me)	places
in community	In the relationships that exist between people and also amongst the natural world when we show up to [--?--]	something greater that we sense but do not know
in community	maybe God	the earth and the wider universe
		The emotion of love.
		The whole planet is alive and sacred.

14. The terms below often pertain to some aspects of people's spiritual lives. Please indicate the extent to which you use them (privately or otherwise) to refer to or describe your spiritual life (*please circle one number for each term*):

Averages are in last column (items have been reordered from most to least frequently used):

	Use very often	---	---	---	---	---	Don't use much or not at all	AVE
a. Love	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(2.06)
b. Life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(2.15)
c. Community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(2.56)
d. Connectedness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(2.61)
e. Nature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(2.66)
f. Other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(2.95)
g. Reason/Logic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(3.33)
h. Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(3.37)
i. Solitude/meditation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(3.62)
j. Light	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(3.95)
k. God/divinity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(4.88)
l. The Twelve Steps	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(5.78)

(If "other," please specify one other term) _____

For the "other" option above, specified answers with scale values were:

- 1 "The Universe," "Energy"
- 1 Enchantment
- 1 Oneness
- 1 Health
- 1 energy, universe
- 1 too many to list. There are so many metaphors - not one can capture all. Still I wish you had included the feminine (including Goddess) as an option.
- 1 Gestalt therapy
- 2 variable – evolving
- 2 ancestor research
- 2 Good - thinking & working toward what is good.
- 2 Energy, Awareness, Openness
- 2 The Divine, Oneness, Wholeness, Life Force
- 2 gratitude/appreciation
- 3 Blessings

15. How often do you think about what happens to you after the end of life? (*circle a number*)

Quite often	---	Now and then	---	Almost never		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Average on the scale was 4.45.

Some people commented on their scale response. Answers, paired with response on the scale above:

- 2 I believe in some sort of re-incarnation, recycling!
- 2 I place my answer on the scale above because I do imagine how my life will be when I die.
- 5 I think about my life ending - but really not beyond that...
- 4 I've been to a number of funerals this year, so that makes me think of it a little more, but I think our actions should be based on what we believe is right in our current life.
- 3 My mind/thoughts go to the dissolution of Spirit as it leaves the physical body.
- 5 Only when thinking about close deceased relatives
- 1 This comes up often in my Buddhist-inspired spiritual practices, particularly meditation & the lojong slogans.

16. Would you say your spiritual life is mostly a communal experience or a private experience?
(circle a number)

Mostly social	- - -	A mix of social and private	- - -	Mostly private		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Average on the scale was 3.92.

Why did you place your answer where you did on the scale above?

Answers, paired with response on the scale above:

- 1 I'm very social. That's life for me.
- 1 Mine really starts and ends with USG.
- 2 Much of my spirituality is related to USG & people I've connected with there.
- 2 While I had a meditation practice as my private experience, I also deeply value communal experiences to enhance my spiritual life.
- 2 Because my spiritual life is mostly about the community and the people around me.
- 2 I don't have much spirituality in my life outside of UUism & USG.
- 2 see previous answers
- 2 sacred is present in the relationship among living beings
- 3 I've no idea!
- 3 Since our church isn't very spiritual (which I think is a weakness) I get more spirituality from myself.
- 3 It's a private experience infinitely amplified through the communal.
- 3 I feel a connection to spiritual life at our services at USG.
- 3 Started out private, became one of community. Then discovered that out of connection with others, I can go deeper inside.
- 3 I depend a lot on our USG services & SGM to connect with the spiritual. I also sometimes experience a spontaneous awareness of sacredness - usually in nature in solitary moments.
- 3 I really enjoy the community of church and that is one of the main reasons that I come.
- 4 Hardly any if it is "social" but about half is "communal"
- 4 I believe in both the person and interconnectedness of people.
- 4 Both work for me - a good balance - and they "inform" each other
- 4 My life is a mixture of self-reflection & community (relationships) and these two elements feed off of each other.
- 4 I know that the spiritual experience is personal for me, but it doesn't have meaning without community, or at least a partner.
- 4 I communicate with others and with my self. I remember and try to improve close emotional contact with others.
- 4 Some spiritual practices are helped by doing it together with others (social justice, love, celebration), while others are private (meditation, nature).
- 4 For me, it's a pretty personal experience but sharing/challenging/debating/engaging in discussion with others can help bring clarity to your own spiritual experience.
- 4 I believe in life each and every one of us can only experience life privately, but we share these experiences communally.
- 4 Because it represents my current thinking.
- 4 I've had friends of faith most of my life, but have only connected with USG (the first church I've ever attended more than once or twice) in the past year.
- 4 The fact that I found & adopted Unitarian Universalism as a part of my life is due to the community I found at USG. I strive to guide my life by the things I learn here.
- 4 My private meditation is essential, and feels different than group meditation. My attendance of a worship service, and joining people who are seeking and loving is equally as important to feel supported on my spiritual journey.
- 4 I think the 2 modes build on each other.
- 4 Both community and meditation form my spiritual life.
- 4 I experience spiritual connection through relationships with others and myself.

- 4 I have had intense private experiences and strong communal ones.
- 4 both are necessary for balance and completeness
- 4 There are social aspects, but also private aspects.
- 4 because spiritual and social are very much connected
- 4 I don't talk about it often but if someone asks, I will tell
- 4 A combination of my private spiritual practice and how it affects my interactions in the world.
- 4 It's a mixture of both.
- 4 Solitude in nature and light is my daily practice. Communal experiences are my weekly practice.
- 4 I enjoy my private spirituality but I feel very much a part of community. Part of my spirituality is community.
- 4 I love the communal experience of church service but also feel very spiritual when out in nature enjoying animals, birds, streams, sunsets, etc.
- 4 private = meditation & study practice alone; community = Sunday services, Buddhist services & sessions, small group ministry
- 4 I participate in 2 ways: 1) chalice lighting, reading, and sing Spirit of Life each morning; 2) attend services as much as possible and becoming more active.
- 5 I meditate alone, but join with others at USG and other groups.
- 5 Because the USG community doesn't tend to discuss disbelief, the so-called afterlife, why people have faith or lack it. As a result my time thinking about spirituality is mostly private.
- 5 The communal aspect of my religion is not the same as my spiritual experience.
- 5 The social UU community is very valuable to me as a source of new & creative spiritual perspective. Biased as I am to think of human life as existing in discrete units called "people," my spiritual practice often appears to take place "alone."
- 5 Because I often feel more spiritually connected when among people who are celebrating their spirituality.
- 5 I think that spirituality is something within you and not something that needs to be shared.
- 5 Because both are important to me.
- 6 Because I am a private person.
- 6 Spiritual experiences are usually like "peak experiences" for me - I am very private, & they are internal. I don't announce or even share them.
- 7 That's just how I am about most things. It will be interesting to see if I become more communal in this setting with the host of activities.
- 7 Because my spiritual life is something I care very little about.
- 7 I prefer to be spiritual by myself

17. What is your age? _____

Average age was 50.7 years.

