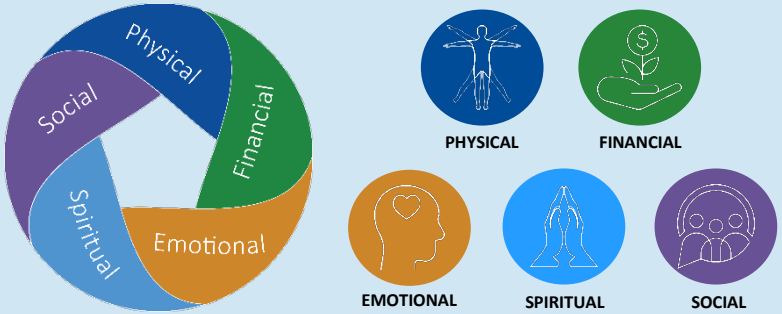
Wespath

2025

Clergy Well-Being Survey Highlights







Overview

- **The well-being of United Methodist clergy affects the entire connection**, including the families, congregations and communities they serve
- **Wespath supports well-being with a focus on five dimensions** of physical, emotional, spiritual, social and financial well-being

The biennial Clergy Well-Being Survey provides meaningful feedback to ensure programs and resources meet the needs of our participants

Areas of Stability | Compared to 2023

- After a decline between 2013–2023, some areas have stabilized in 2025 but remain at concerning levels
  - **Asthma** and **blood pressure** (hypertension)
  - **Functional difficulties** from depressive symptoms
  - **Social well-being** (feeling understood by friends and family)
  - **Occupational stress** (loneliness, isolation, too many demands)
  - **Workload**
  - Perceived **stress**
  - **Financial knowledge** and **retirement readiness**
  - **Sleep** and **vacation time**



Indicates no change from 2023 results



Areas of Improvement

| Compared to 2023

- Areas that have shown improvement, but are still below desired levels

  - **Normal BMI** – normal vs. too high
  - **Spiritual Vitality** – presence of God in Ministry (sharing sacraments, counseling, pastoral visitations, church events)
  - **Congregational health** – force for positive change, vital and alive congregations, clear mission, willing to meet new challenges
  - Levels of **depression** are down compared to 2021
  - Improvement in number of people **seeking treatment** for depression

Improved from 2023 results

Areas Worsening | Compared to 2023

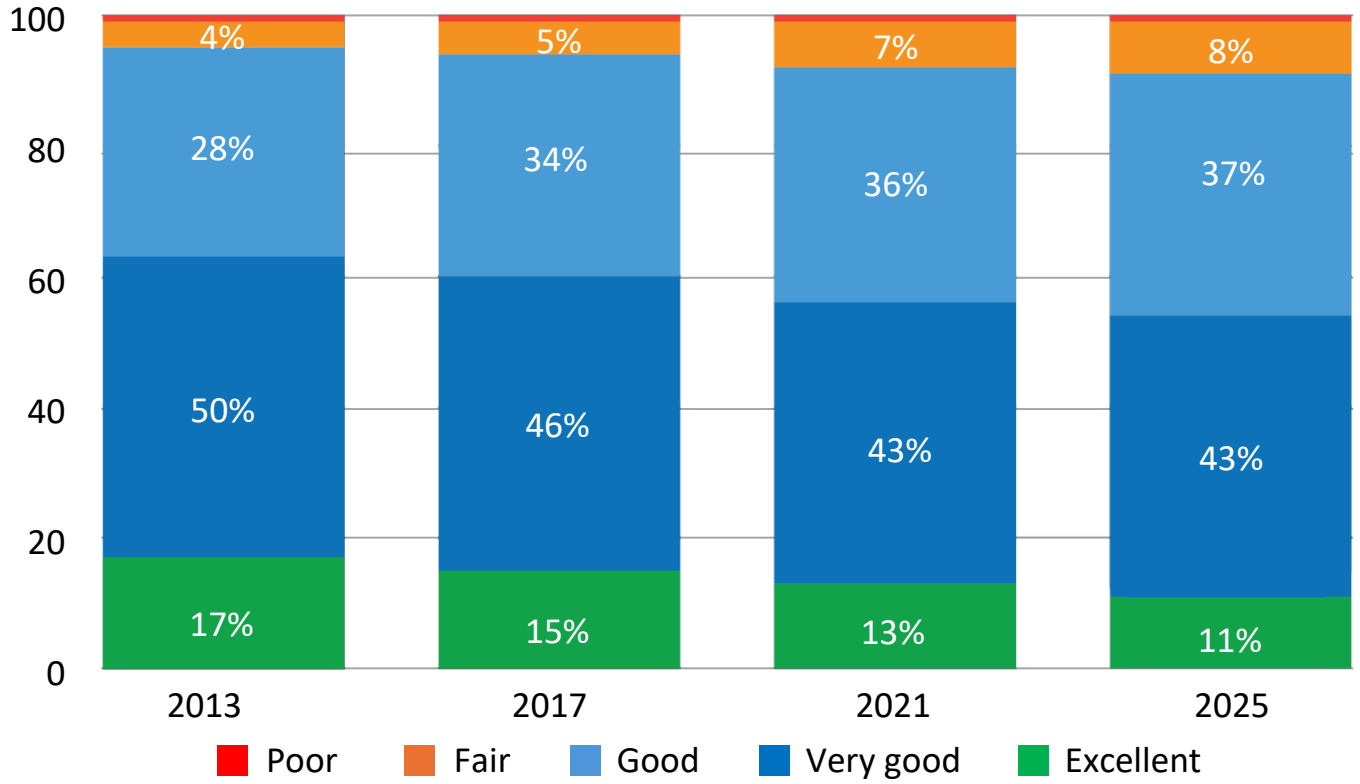
- 2025 areas with ongoing concern
  - **Cholesterol**
  - **Financial stress**
  - **Aspects of Spiritual Well-Being**
    - Things unfolding according to God's intent
    - If I become ill, things will be ok
    - Feeling at peace



Worse than 2023 results

Decline in Overall Perceived Well-Being

The number of clergy reporting "very good" or "excellent" health has declined since 2013



<1% Poor (all years)

The percentage of respondents that report excellent to very good health is approximately 10% points below the matched U.S. benchmark

Benchmark: National Health Information Survey (NHIS)

Dimensions of Well-Being



Spiritual Dimension—2025

Spiritual Well-Being in ministry has improved

Spiritual Vitality: Feel the presence of God in ministry

76% When conducting pastoral visitations

72% When participating in Church-related events

86% When sharing sacraments

76% When sharing in crisis intervention or counseling

Improved from 2023 results



Spiritual Well-Being in daily life is generally stable

Spiritual Vitality: Feel the presence of God in daily life

76% ↔

Have a vital relationship with God

69% ↔

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

45% !

Feel events are unfolding according to God's intent

↔ *No change from 2023 results*

! *Worse than 2023 results*



Physical Dimension—2025

Percentage of clergy with a high BMI is improving, but still higher than the matched benchmark

19%

Have a Body Mass Index (BMI) in the normal range

80%

Have a BMI in the overweight or obese range*

Obesity across UMC clergy continues to be **10+** percentage points higher than the U.S. and matched benchmarks

Benchmark: National Health Information Survey (NHIS)

Improved from 2023 results

* *The 2023 summary only reported percentage of clergy classified as obese*



Diabetes and hypertension are stable, cholesterol worse than previous years

20% !

With high cholesterol

32% ↔

With hypertension or pre-hypertension

27% ↔

With diabetes or pre-diabetes

! *Worse than 2023 results*

↔ *No change from 2023 results*



Emotional Dimension—2025

Depression and depressive symptoms are stable, but continue to be a serious problem

10% ↔

Report suffering from depression*

19% ✓

Report being treated for depression

35% ↔

Report functional difficulties from depressive symptoms*

* *Higher than U.S. matched benchmark from National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)*

↔ *No change from 2023 results*

✓ *Improved from 2023 results*



Most measures of perceived stress are stable, but still worse than previous years

48% !
Feel things were not going their way

40% ↔
Not able to control irritations in their life

37% ↔
Don’t feel “on top of things”

28% ↔
Feel nervous and stressed

↔ *No change from 2023 results*

! *Worse than 2023 results*



Social Dimension—2025

Social connection is steady, but too many clergy still feel disconnected from family and friends

28% ↔

Report not feeling understood by family and friends

↔ *No change from 2023 results*



Work-Related Stress—2025

Stable but still an area of concern

33% ↔

Feel lonely and isolated at work

32% ↔

Feel too many demands from the congregation

27% ↔

Fewer full-time clergy are working 51+ hours per week over the last decade

↔ *No change from 2023 results*



Financial Dimension—2025

Retirement readiness is steady, but overall financial stress has worsened

42% !

Think their financial situation is at least moderately stressful

48% ↔

Not confident they are on track for a comfortable retirement

74% ↔

Think their financial situation is at least slightly stressful

! *Worse than 2023 results*

↔ *No change from 2023 results*

Executive Summary

Executive Summary—
Key Demographic Differences

Men have higher rates of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes

Women have higher rates of asthma and autoimmune conditions, experience more stress and functional difficulty with depressive symptoms

Older clergy suffer from more physical ailments

Younger clergy struggle more with stress, depression and spiritual well-being

Rural clergy suffer from more from physical ailments like diabetes and high blood pressure

Urban clergy struggle more with spiritual vitality

White/non-Hispanic clergy have higher rates of depression, score lower on spiritual health and get less exercise

Black clergy have higher rates of hypertension, but report better spiritual health, less stress and more exercise

Hispanic clergy report more financial stress and get less exercise and sleep

Asian clergy have lower rates of obesity, diabetes, asthma and autoimmune conditions, and report less stress and better spiritual well-being





Executive Summary—Key Vocational Differences

Part-time pastors report higher rates of some physical conditions, but better spiritual health and less stress

Full-time clergy experience lower spiritual health and more stress, including financial stress

Church planters report healthier ministry settings and get more physical activity

Clergy in **pastoral** appointments report lower overall health

Those in **extension** roles report more stress

Clergy at **smaller churches** have more physical health concerns and take fewer vacation days

Those at **larger churches** experience more occupational stress and lower spiritual well-being

Clergy with **multiple charges** are less healthy overall and experience less social connection

Clergy who **frequently change appointments** experience lower overall health, more obesity, higher cholesterol, more depression, more stress, and lower spiritual health

Those in **cross-racial or cross-cultural** appointments report less depression, better spiritual health and healthier ministry settings

What's Next?

In line with our mission of "Caring For Those Who Serve," Wespath takes the results of this survey seriously.

We will continue taking action to stem downward trends and help the Church support clergy's overall well-being. Our efforts are concentrated in several areas:

1. **Continue to cultivate our well-being programs and resources to ensure they are meeting the areas of need for clergy**
2. **Encourage use of programs that help bolster areas of well-being**
3. **Foster and encourage conversations about clergy well-being with leaders and members across the UMC connection**
4. **Work across the denomination to combine energy, efforts and focus on improving clergy well-being**

Wespath