



Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

A Decade of Data on Clergy Well-Being

March 2025

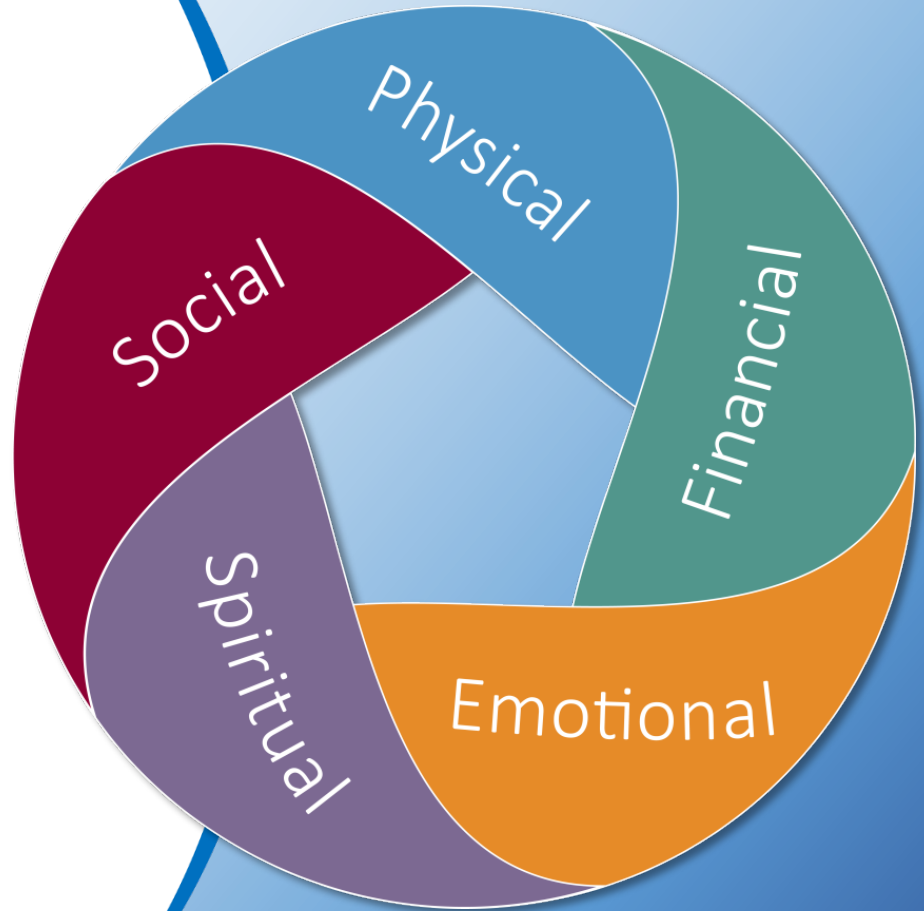


Wespath Cares for Those Who Serve With...

- High-quality, professionally administered benefits
- Well-being focus in and out of benefit plans



5 Dimensions of Well-Being



Well-Being Programs within the HealthFlex Plan

Assess Health Status and Risks



Blueprint for Wellness® (BFW)—Biometric screening to assess more than 25 key health indicators



Health Check—Online health assessment measures lifestyle risks in areas of stress, sleep, physical activity, nutrition and more

Improve or Maintain Well-being



Personify Health—Tools to support well-being and track other healthy habits to earn incentives



Employee Assistance Program (Optum EAP)—Confidential and free support for emotional well-being



Health Coaching (Personify Health)—Guidance from certified professionals to meet well-being goals



Chronic Disease Prevention and Diabetes Management Programs (Omada)—Reduce risk for developing Type 2 diabetes or heart disease; help manage T1 or T2 diabetes



MDLIVE® Behavioral Health—Video or phone chat with a licensed therapist or psychiatrist



WW (Weight Watchers®)—Supports weight loss with healthy habit development



Well-Being Resources for All

- Saving Grace
- First Aid for Mental Health
- Toolkits and other resources

Wespath's Clergy Well-Being Survey

Wespath conducted its 7th Clergy Well-Being Survey in 2023

- Random sample of active, U.S. UMC clergy
- Questions regarding all five dimensions of well-being
- 5,000 invited to participate
- 25% response rate
- Results compared to national benchmarks*
 - Matched on gender, age, marital status, race/ethnicity

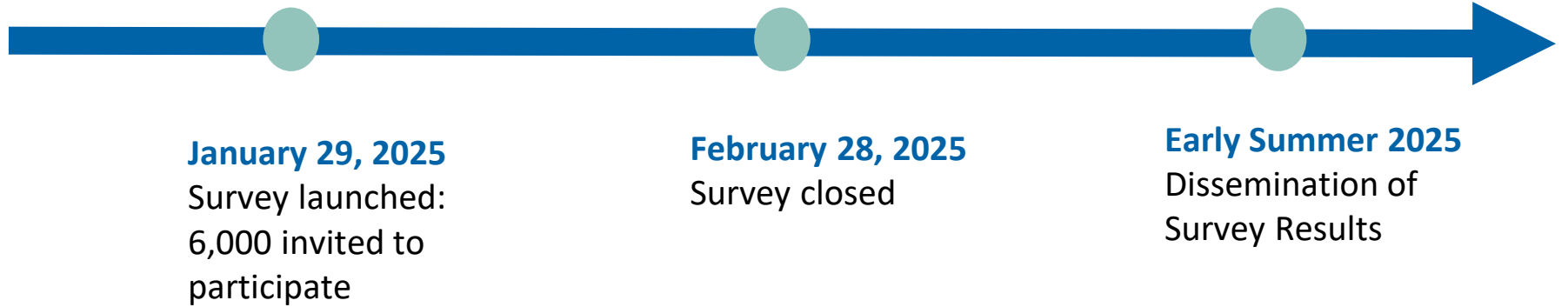


Link to 2023 Report

*National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)
National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

2025 Timeline

Wespath's 8th Clergy Well-Being Survey



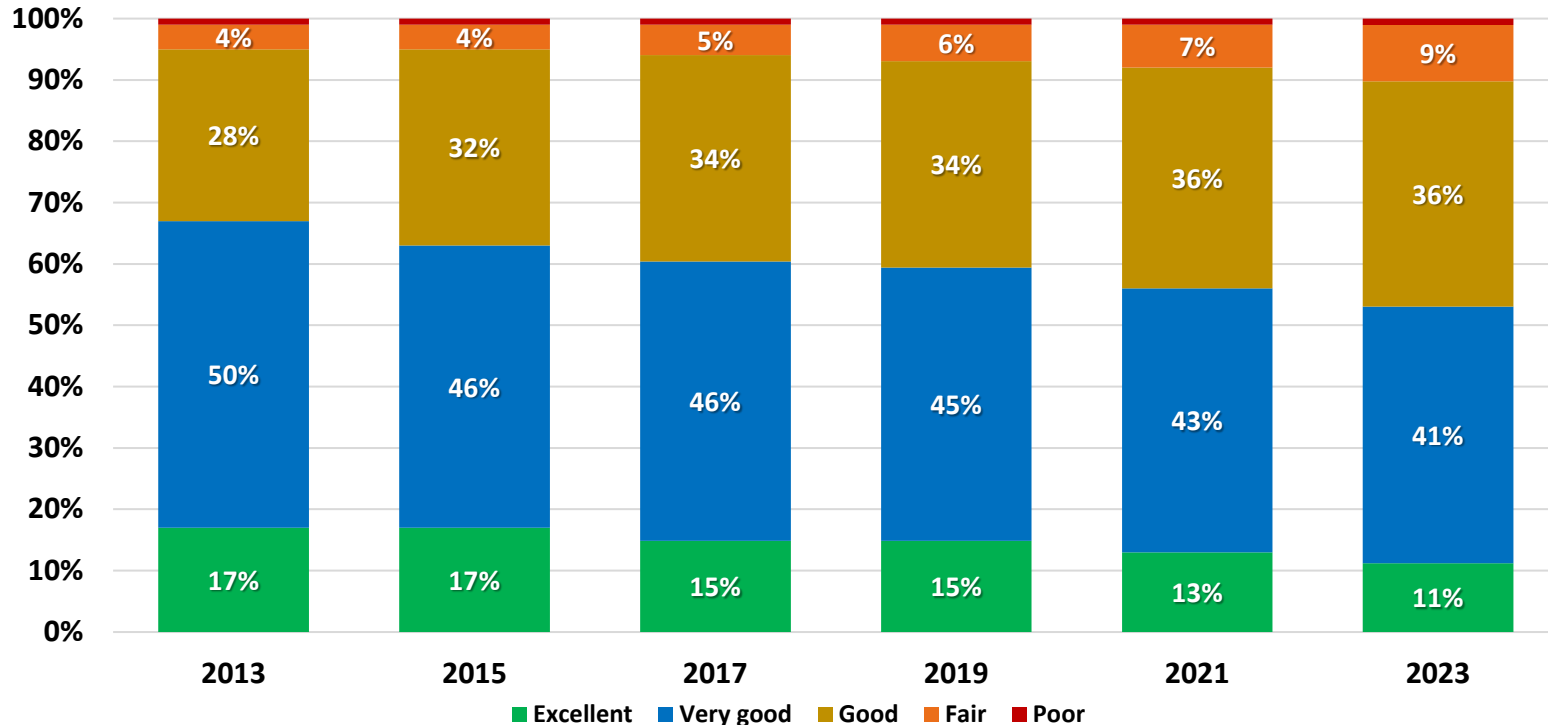
10-Year Lookback



2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023

Trends In Clergy Well-Being

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



Physical Well-Being Trends

UMC clergy have consistently had a rate of obesity 10+ percentage points higher than a matched benchmark*.

	2013	2023
Obesity	40%	49%
Diabetes	12%	14%
Pre-diabetes	9%	14%
Hypertension	20%	25%

**Benchmark is NHIS (National Health Information Survey); Obesity is measured as a BMI over 30. While BMI is not always the best individual health metric, it is still considered appropriate for measuring physical and metabolic health in populations.*





Actions Toward Physical Well-Being

- Clergy have consistently reported high levels of moderate physical activity (30+ minutes per day); 15 min/day of vigorous physical activity
- Clergy have consistently reported about 7 hours of sleep per night

Emotional Well-Being Trends

	2013	2023
Depression prevalence	5%	10%
Functional difficulty from depressive symptoms*	26%	35%
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%

UMC clergy have consistently reported functional difficulty from depressive symptoms at a rate more than twice a matched benchmark.*

**Use of PHQ-9 to measure frequency of depressive symptoms over prior 2 week period;
Benchmark is the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)*





Financial Well-Being Trends

- The percentage of clergy reporting financial stress has remained relatively stable over the last 10 years
- **Almost 75% of clergy are at least slightly stressed by finances, 38% are moderately to extremely stressed**
- Only 50-57% feel they have a high level of financial knowledge or are on track for a comfortable retirement

Spiritual Well-Being Trends

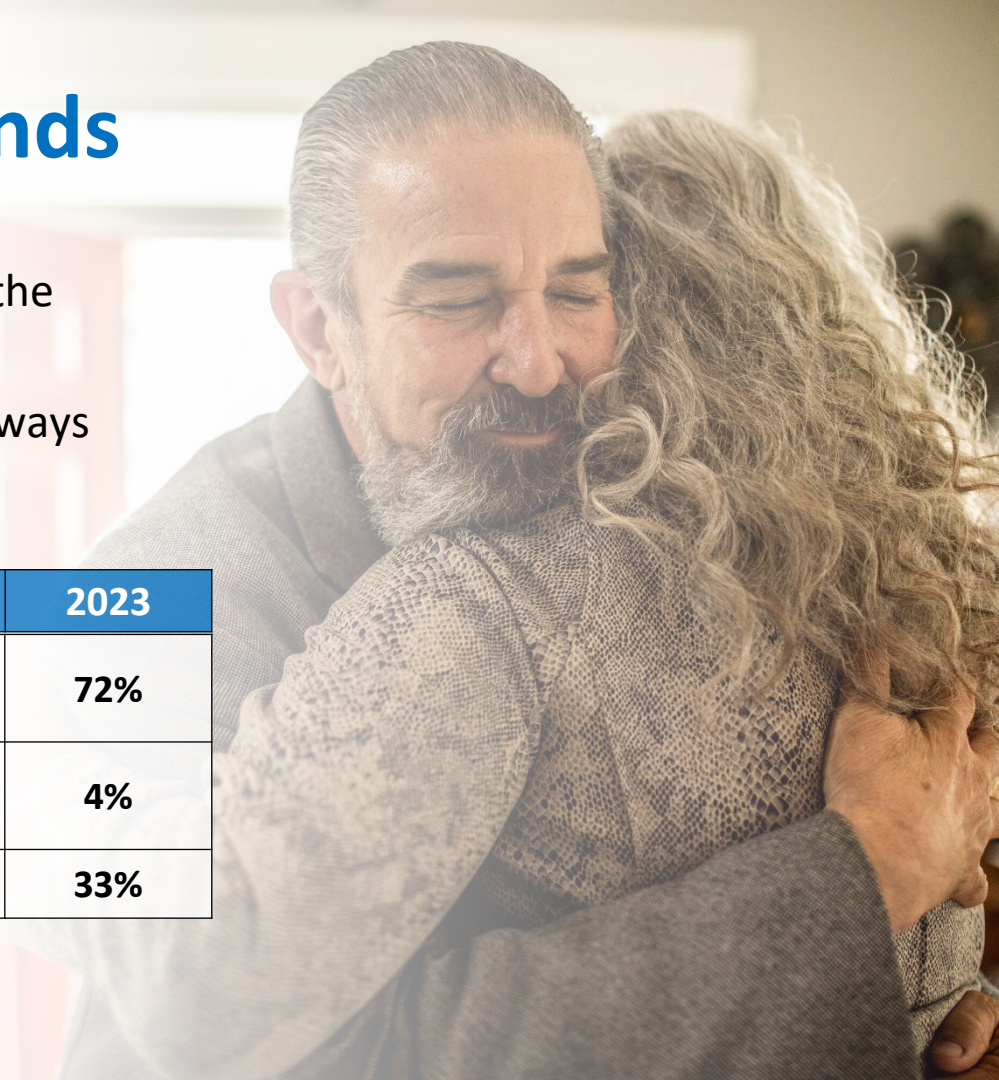
- Less dramatic decline than other dimensions
- Not all clergy feel God's presence in ministry
- Over the past 10 years, greatest decline in:
 - I feel sense of harmony in myself: 63% (10 point decline)
 - I feel peaceful: 62% (12 point decline)

	2023
Feel the presence of God when conducting pastoral visitations	73%
Feel the presence of God when participating in Church events	68%
Feel the presence of God in the midst of serious conflict	53%
Feel events are unfolding according to God's intent	52%
Life lacks meaning and purpose	5%

Social Well-Being Trends

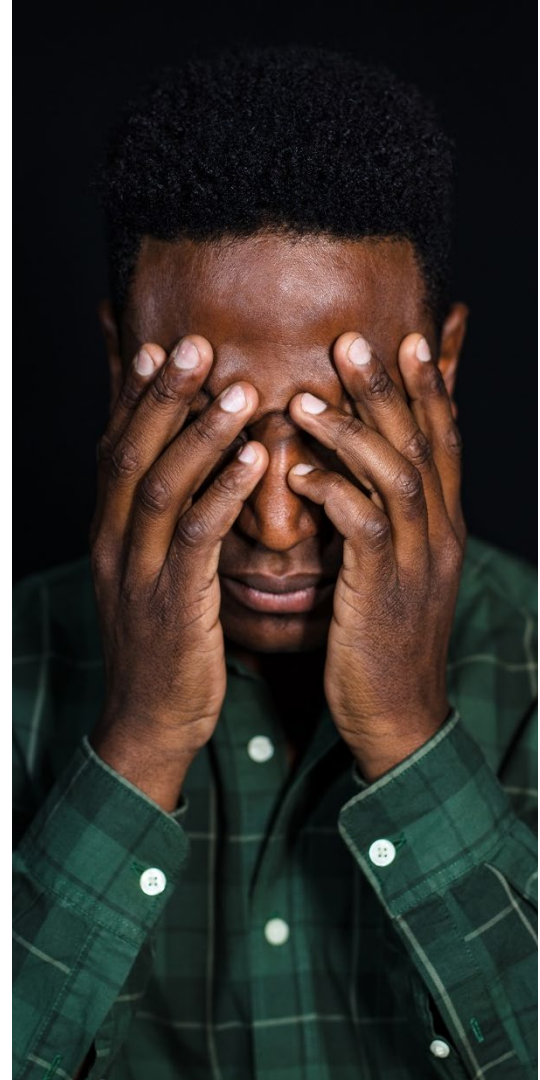
- Social connection has worsened over the past 10 years
- Clergy feel isolated at work and not always understood by their social networks

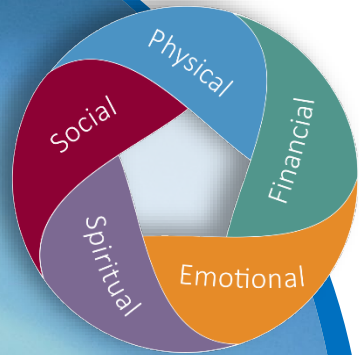
	2013	2023
Feel understood by family/friends most of time	81%	72%
Feel understood by family/friends hardly ever	1%	4%
Feel lonely and isolated at work	25%	33%



Work Related Stress Trends

	2013	2023
Experiencing stress because of challenges in the organization or congregation	46%	52%
People in your organization/congregation made too many demands on you	30%	33%
Full-time clergy working 51+ hours/week	42%	27%
Part-time clergy working 41+ hours/week	21%	16%
Average number of vacation days in last year	16 days	15 days





Disaffiliation Impacted All Dimensions of Well-Being

- **37% reported dealing with disaffiliation conflict or difficulty in their ministry**
- **This impacted 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*

Demographic Variability

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

Women: higher rates of asthma and autoimmune, more stress

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

Older clergy: more physical ailments;

Younger clergy: more stress, depression and spiritual health concerns

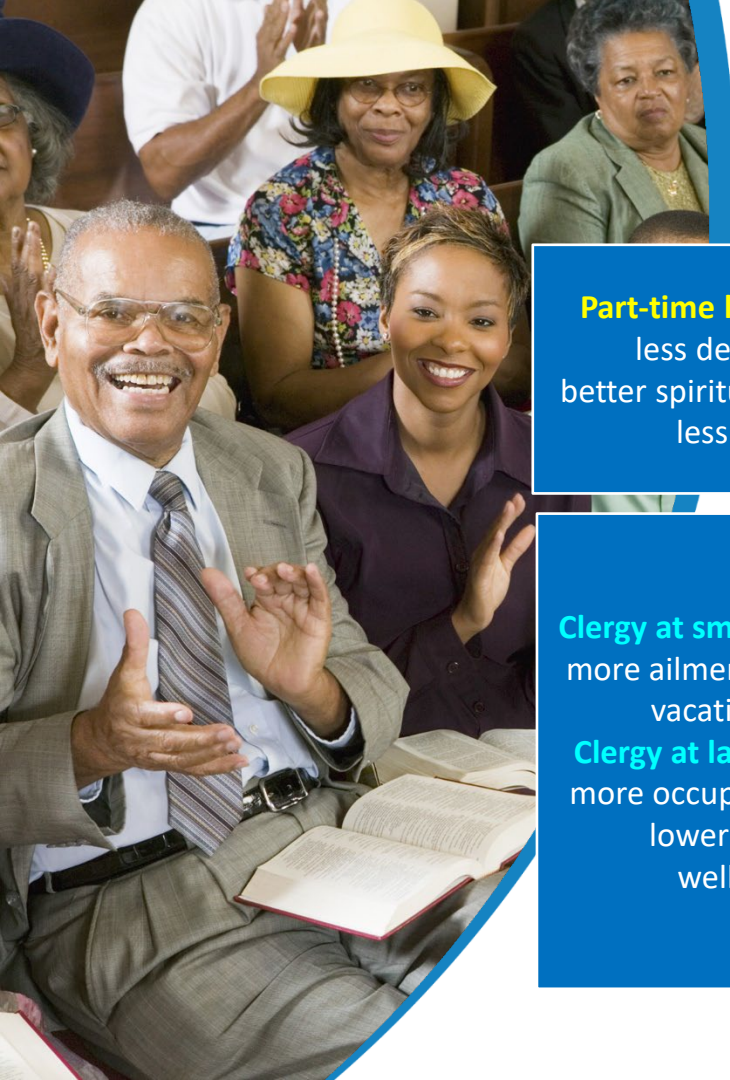
Asian clergy: lower obesity, diabetes and autoimmune, less stress

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

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

Interplay of Individual and Environment

- Individual choices *and* environmental factors converge to influence clergy well-being
- Accountability is key
- Identifying and advocating for system changes is also key



Individual
Factors



Environmental
Factors



Behavior



What Are **YOUR** Thoughts?



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