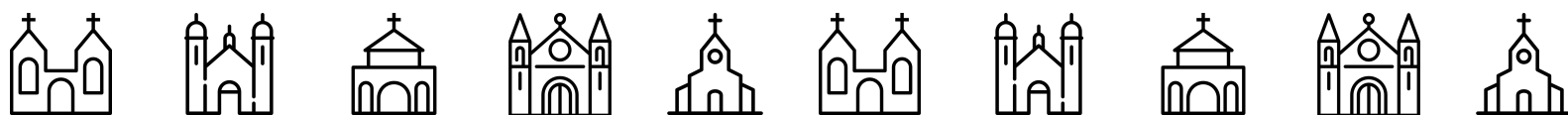


# Congregation and Nonprofit Collaboration

An Executive Report of Results from the  
2018 Little Rock Congregations Study





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# About the Little Rock Congregations Study

The Little Rock Congregations Study (LRCS) is a community-based research project that engages students in learning about the impact of faith-based community engagement.

The Little Rock Congregations Study is led by Dr. Rebecca A. Glazier, an associate professor in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Dr. Glazier leads an interdisciplinary research team including Dr. Kirk Leach, who studies nonprofit organizations, and Dr. Gerald Driskill, a communication scholar. The research team also includes both graduate and undergraduate students. Since the study began in 2012, over 170 students have been involved.



*Little Rock Congregation Study student researchers in 2018.*

In 2012, the LRCS worked with five churches in Little Rock and learned that congregants who report hearing political messages at church are more likely to be politically active.

In 2016, LRCS researchers partnered with the Clinton School of Public Service to expand the study to include a more diverse set of congregations.

Greater student participation in the research in 2016 enabled us to work with 17 different places of worship.



In 2016, the research focused on community engagement. We found that congregants who report hearing sermons on helping in the community also have higher levels of political efficacy—they believe that they can make a difference.

In 2018, the LRCS focused on surveying and interviewing religious leaders to learn more about how and when collaborations with nonprofits occur. This executive report focuses on the results of the 2018 research.



*LRCS student researcher, Faith Thomas, presenting results of her data analysis at a community event in 2017.*

# Study Goals



Learn more about the impacts of local faith-based community engagement



Get students out of the classroom and into the community



Provide relevant and meaningful findings to the community

## Using the Internet to Share Findings with the Community

On our website:  
<https://research.ualr.edu/lrcs/>

Westover Hills Presbyterian Women Reach Out to the Incarcerated

March 31, 2018 by Rebecca Glazier (Editor)

Incarceration can be a serious life set-back. But the women of Westover Hills Presbyterian Church are serving the incarcerated to make sure that any set-backs are not permanent. Since January 2016, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church women have offered literacy classes at the Pulaski County Regional Detention Facility (PCPDF). Class topics have included poetry by Maya Angelou and Tupac Shakur, grammar, punctuation, homonyms, sentence structure, and weekly vocabulary lessons. One student, Kevin, described the literacy classes as "a thought-provoking, mind-changing hour of empowerment." More than 450 students have taken the literacy classes at PCPDF.

In 2017, Westover joined with Magdalene Coming Home and Hope Rises to offer re-entry classes for women at Hawkins prison in Wrightsville. The re-entry classes help women transition from prison back to society and community. The classes they teach at Hawkins prison include: financial literacy, self-esteem, anger management, parenting, and resume writing.

On Tuesday afternoons, Westover volunteers also teach an art class for up to two dozen youth at Pulaski County Juvenile Detention Center. In the classes, youth are exposed to watercolors, modeling clay, collages, diffusion art, and the ever-popular "food art" (decorating cupcakes and cookies for the holidays). The most popular class, hands-down, was decorating (and eating!) candy houses during the December holiday season. Juvenile Detention Center volunteer Robin Tutt says that "the art program allows the kids to use their imaginations, to look at what life can be rather than what their lives are today."

English as a second language instructor Jean Moffett works with students in her class at PCPDF.

On our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/LittleRockCongregationsStudy/>

Little Rock Congregations Study

Published by Rebecca Glazier on November 27 at 6:57 AM

People in Little Rock are great at giving back! What is the easiest way to give back this #GivingTuesday? Like, Follow, and Share the Little Rock Congregations Study! We will pick four people who do and give \$50 each to their favorite charities in our city. #lrcs #goodnessinLR

Little Rock Congregations Study  
@LittleRockCongregationsStudy

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Info and Ads

72% volunteered outside their place of worship in the past month

76% volunteered at their place of worship in the past month

476 People Reached  
20 Engagements

Don't Miss

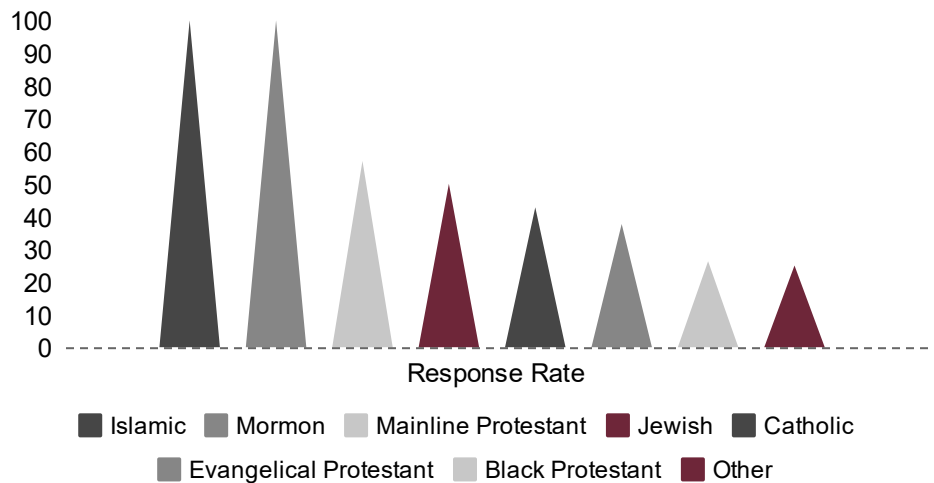
# Methodology

In 2018, the Little Rock Congregations Study (LRCS) conducted surveys and interviews of congregation leaders to learn more about the social services congregations provide and the conditions under which collaborative partnerships occur. The research team reached out to Little Rock religious leaders via email, telephone, mail, and Facebook to invite them to participate in the study.

A total of 112 clergy members from diverse congregations participated in the research, out of 358 congregations within the city limits of Little Rock. The following figures provide additional information on the makeup of these respondents.

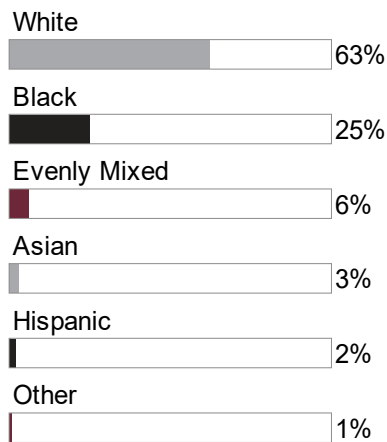
Little Rock is a diverse city, with large and small, urban and rural congregations from many faith traditions. Because the LRCS is a community-based research project, it is most successful when the community sees benefits from participating. The research team continues to reach out to religious leaders across our city to share results and to listen in order to do a better job serving the community. We hope that those reading this report will say a good word about the research in their circles of influence.

## Response Rate by Religious Tradition



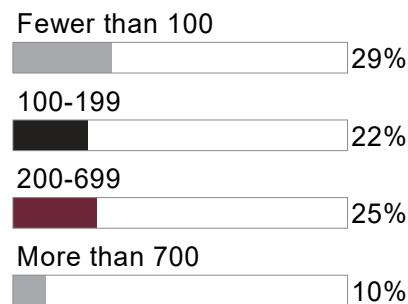
Note: Figure represents the percentage of congregations that participated in the survey by religious tradition. The total overall response rate was 31.3%

## Sample Make up by Majority Race/Ethnicity of Congregation



Note: 16 congregations did not answer the question about the majority race/ethnicity of the congregation

## Sample Make up by Congregation Average Weekly Attendance

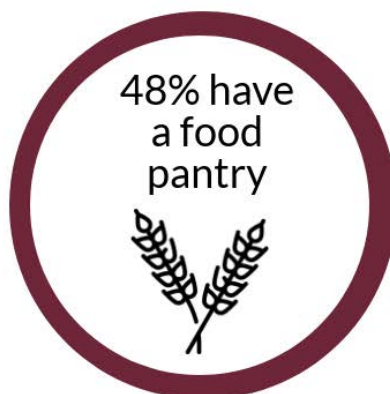


Note: 15 congregations did not answer the question about average weekly attendance

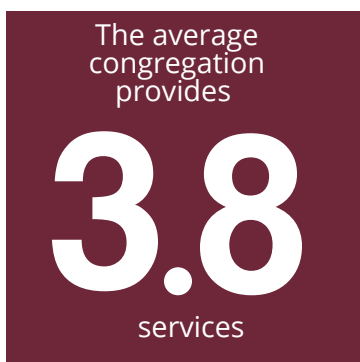
# Social Services and Little Rock Congregations

In our 2018 survey of congregation leaders, we asked about the social services that congregations provide. We found that congregations do a lot in our community, providing services like mental health counseling, food aid, and after-school programs. The most common services were marriage counseling, food pantries, and rent/utility assistance.

Religious congregations provide many important social services in Little Rock



The average congregation in our sample provides 3.8 services. With 358 places of worship in Little Rock, congregations provide hundreds of social services, often to people who are not members of their congregation.



**"If we are blessed then we are blessed for the purpose of blessing others; not to consume it upon ourselves."**

-Pastor Joe Jackson, Jr. & Pastor Bob Perry,  
The Church at Wellington

# Congregations and Nonprofits: Natural Partners

- In 2017, the IRS reported that there were a total of 14,227 registered nonprofit organizations in the state of Arkansas.[1]
- Arkansas is 4th in the nation for the number of nonprofits per capita.
- 20.5% of Arkansas residents volunteer and 43.2% donate at least \$25 to charity a year.
- Arkansas is 7th in the nation for percentage of residents giving.

With both congregations and nonprofits working to help our community, it makes sense that they would partner with one another.

We find that many congregations have partnerships. In fact, 56% of responding congregations reported partnering on the most important program their congregation worked on in the past two years.

Of those who host food pantries, 53% partner to provide those services. Partnership numbers are even higher for more resource-intensive services; 60% of congregations who provide medical screenings or services do so with partnerships.



One great example of a nonprofit and a congregation partnership is Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church and Our House homeless shelter. The Holy Souls Parish takes dinner to Our House on the first Tuesday and 5th Saturday of each month. They provide food for around 80 residents each time they serve at Our House. This is a beautiful, long-term relationship, with some members of Holy Souls that have been working with Our House for over 25 years.





# Types of Collaborative Relationships

The word 'collaboration' can be interpreted in many ways, illustrated by the Collaboration Spectrum below. As organizations move along the continuum they must pay attention to activities that build trust among the partners. Source: Tamarack Institute

## The Collaboration Spectrum

Competing	Co-existing	Communicating	Cooperating	Coordinating	Collaborating
Competing for clients, resources, partners, public attention	No systematic connection between organizations	Inter-organizational information sharing [e.g networking]	As needed, often informal interaction on discrete activities or projects	Organizations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes	Fully integrated programs, planning, funding

## What religious leaders in Little Rock are saying about collaboration

**"You know, we're not big enough to have a clothing closet or a job training [program], but we can connect people to other churches that we partner with that are a little bit bigger."**

-Karen Wenneker,  
Office Administrator for Grace Church

**"We support this country. We love it. And we're going to do our best to keep it strong and united. I have so many very strong relations with churches — with Christian, Jewish friends. ... I think things will be OK."**

-Dr. Mahmoud Hassanein,  
Imam at the Islamic Center of Little Rock

**"All of us offer just a little bit and nobody has the whole pie. We just have piece of pies."**

-Pastor Larry D. Johnson,  
Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church

**"Our first focus is spiritual growth, but then our next focus is helping people in every aspect of their lives. [We try] to make sure they understand that the church is about spiritual growth but also is about helping people in their everyday lives."**

-Pastor Billy Burris,  
St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church

**"You know, you can get a lot accomplished when nobody cares about who gets the credit for it!"**

-Pastor J. Barrington Minix,  
Gaines Street Baptist Church

# Benefits of Community Engagement

Our research indicates the community engagement by congregations has many positive benefits -- for the congregations themselves, for the people who worship there, and for the broader community. Our research also finds that many local congregations are utilizing their resources (time, money, volunteers, facilities, etc.) to help address important issues in our city.

## Engagement Helps the Community



Congregations that partner with nonprofits or other congregations are able to reach more community members in need.

## Engagement Helps Congregations



Congregations that are engaged in the community have members that are more likely to volunteer at their own congregation. Service is not a zero-sum game. Serving in the community fosters a culture of service that also leads to more service to the congregation.

## Engagement Helps Congregants



Congregants who attend places of worship where they hear messages about community service and have opportunities to engage in the community are more likely to believe that their voice matters and that they can make a difference.



Students studying faith-based community engagement through this research project also benefit. UA Little Rock graduate, Zartashia Javid, is now working for a nonprofit in Washington, DC.

Zartashia says, "My experience on the LRCS played a key role in landing my current position. Through doing community-based research, I learned the importance of communication with survey participants and showing people the impact of the good work they are doing."

# Motivations for Community Engagement

We know that a lot of Little Rock congregations are already collaborating with other faith-based organizations (FBOs) and/or nonprofits to deliver social services. Collaborations between congregations and nonprofits are commonly thought to occur because of a need to share resources or as a cost-reduction strategy.

The data we collected from Little Rock congregations, however, shows the most popular reason for collaborating in our city is to connect with the community (30.5% of responding clergy gave this reason). The next most popular motivation for collaboration is because of a personal relationship (15% of clergy gave this reason).

One great example of congregations and nonprofits coming together to serve the community is the Esperanza (Hope) Medical Clinic, primarily serving Little Rock's uninsured and underinsured Hispanic population.

The clinic is staffed entirely by volunteers and is supported by Second Baptist Church on John Barrow Rd, St. Andrew's Church, and Geyer Springs Baptist Church.



*Dr. Nate Smith, Director of the Arkansas Department of Health and volunteer at Esperanza Hope Clinic, consults with a volunteer.*



*Volunteers at the Esperanza Hope Health Clinic pray together before opening the clinic doors.*

Rev. Dustin Freeman, Associate Pastor at St. Andrew's Church says, "We see clearly in Jesus' earthly ministry that healing the sick was one of the signs that God's kingdom was near. Esperanza is a way that our church can continue to be a part of that work in one of the communities where it is most needed. Esperanza is also an investment in the unity of the body of Christ, as this work is organized and provided both by and for people from a variety of racial, denominational, and socioeconomic backgrounds."

# Best Practices for Community Engagement

## Identify areas of greatest need

Determine which issues matter most to your congregation by conducting a survey or holding discussion groups. Learn more about community needs and opportunities by holding a speaker series or attending an organization fair. LRCS Researchers can help with this! The 2020 Little Rock Congregations Study will include survey questions for congregants about community issues that matter to them.

## Talk more about community engagement

Our research results show that congregants are more likely to be engaged in the community if they hear messages about engagement at worship services. Clergy can speak more about volunteering, about local and national issues, and about the importance of being involved in the community. Most importantly, religious leaders should model the behaviors they want to see in congregants.

## Partner with others

For places of worship concerned about capacity, partnering with others to increase impact is a viable solution. For instance, St. Mark's Episcopal Church houses a fully volunteer-led food pantry. Partnering with four other churches, Trinity United Methodist Church, First Christian Church, Faith Lutheran Church, and First Church of the Nazarene, the pantry was able to serve 10,699 people in 2017. Partnerships build bridges across faith traditions, strengthen community connection, and increase capacity.



## Gather volunteers

Places of worship and local non-profits are always in need of volunteers. Our research indicates that congregational engagement leads to more volunteering by congregants, both within and outside congregations. Statistically, there is no trade off. Instead, community engagement helps create a culture of service that encourages volunteering across the board.

# Opportunities in Our Community

Congregations are making a difference in Little Rock by working together, partnering with nonprofits, and serving our community. Some examples of the great work congregations are doing in our city are available as spotlights on our project website. Here, we provide some additional resources to help congregations get connected in the local community.



Heart of Arkansas  
United Way

<https://www.heartaruw.org/>

The Heart of Arkansas United Way's website connects users to local volunteer opportunities.



VolunteerMatch

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/>

VolunteerMatch is the most effective way for organizations to recruit highly qualified volunteers. Their website will match your congregation with people who are passionate about and committed to your cause, and who can help when and where you need them.



<https://justserve.org/>

JustServe is a website where the volunteer needs of organizations may be posted and volunteers may search for places to serve in the community, providing opportunities to help those in need and enhancing the quality of life in the community.



<https://www.volunteerar.org/>

VolunteerAR works in partnership with nonprofit, faith-based, government, and community-based organizations throughout the state to increase the level of meaningful volunteer engagement by promoting and highlighting impactful projects that address the critical needs of Arkansans.

If you are a nonprofit, school, faith-based, government or civic organization that would like to partner with Volunteer AR to recruit and manage volunteers, you can go their website and register your organization with them for free.

# Future Research

The Little Rock Congregations Study is an ongoing research project. We are planning now for our next data collection effort in congregations in 2020. We are moving our survey efforts online, using Qualtrics professional survey software to reach a much broader sample of congregants.

We worked with 5 congregations in 2012, 17 congregations in 2016, and we hope to work with 50 or more congregations in 2020. We want as many congregations as possible to be a part of and benefit from this research!

## Participating Congregations Will Commit To:

- Completing a congregation leader survey to provide information about the congregation
- Completing a congregation leader interview with a member of the research team
- Distributing the LRCS electronic survey link to their members

## Participating Congregations Will Receive:

- A report on the demographics and attitudes of their responding congregants
- A comparative report on findings from the entire sample, showing religious leaders how their congregation compares to others across the city
- Information on the issues their members are interested in working on, along with contact information for nearby nonprofits and other organizations that are actively working on those issues



Interested congregations are encouraged to contact:  
The Little Rock Congregations Study  
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# Research Team



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# Clergy Advisory Board



Rev. Ryan Davis  
Bullock Temple  
Christian Methodist  
Episcopal Church



Pastor Ray Williams  
Fellowship Bible Church,  
City Church Network



Pastor Preston Clegg  
Second Baptist Church  
Downtown



Rev. Lindy Vogado  
Second Presbyterian  
Church



Fr. Mark Wood  
St. Theresa  
Catholic Church



Imam Mahmoud  
Hassanein  
Islamic Center  
of Little Rock



Pastor Earnest Thomas  
Saint Mark  
Baptist Church



Outreach Minister  
Ceanne Warner  
Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter-day Saints

The Little Rock Congregations Study Clergy Advisory Board is made up of religious leaders from diverse backgrounds across our city. They advise the research team both on methods (question selection, survey distribution, inclusive question wording, etc.) and on outreach (congregation recruitment, networking, etc.). Board members serve rotating two-year terms.



Project Website: <https://research.ualr.edu/lrcs>  
Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/LittleRockCongregationsStudy/>

