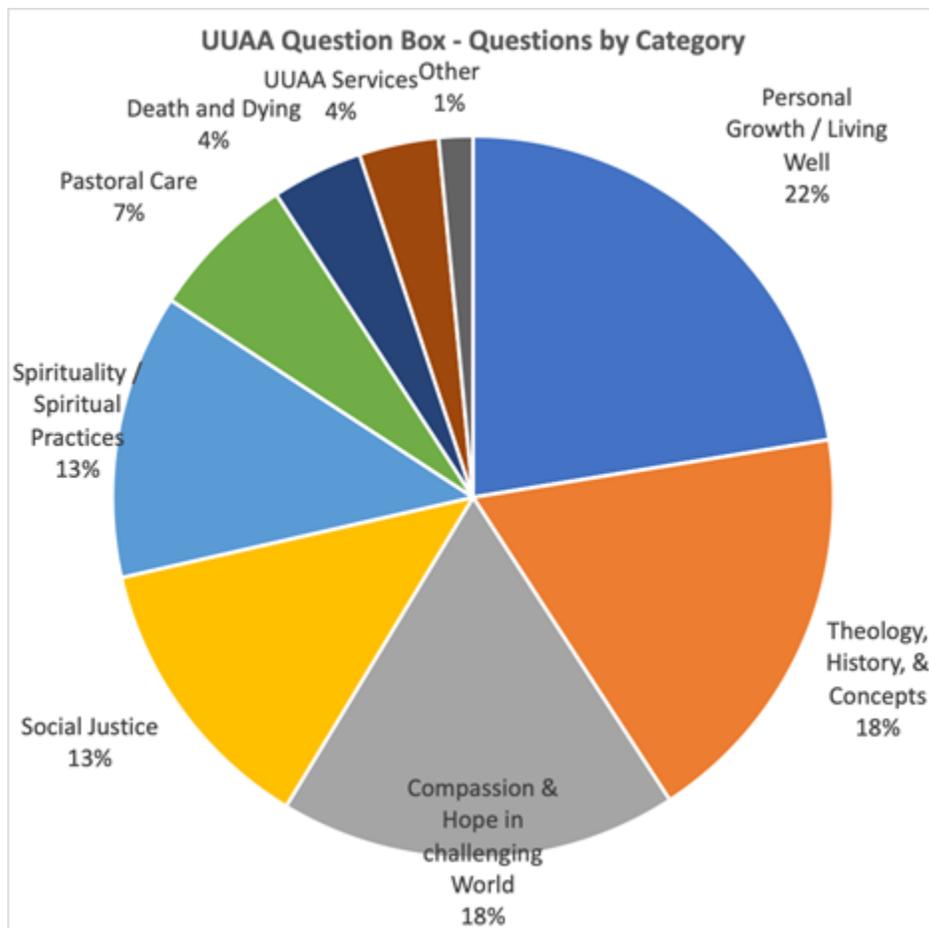


“Our Spiritual Questions,” by Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti, Senior Minister

On Sunday, December 9, 2018, the UUAA community participated in a Sunday service in which individual spiritual questions were invited and collected from those who attended that morning. In formulating a question, attendees were asked to reflect on what feels spiritually important or pressing to them at this time; issues that they might be actively wrestling with. Congregants were invited to write down and submit these questions, and several of the submitted questions were selected at random and answered impromptu by me that morning during our two services. Recordings of these two services (each with different substantive questions that were addressed) are available here:

<http://www.uuaa.org/index.php/worship/on-sunday/sermons-forums-2/178-worship/sermons-and-forums/1024-listen-to-or-read-a-sermon-2018-2019>

In all, 250 spiritually-themed questions were submitted by adults, teens, and kids. Congregants Bobbi Coluni & Rick Witten generously assisted in the initial analysis of this data, and in helping aggregate themes that could be insightful to us as a community. The color pie chart below provides a break down of the major interests, yearnings, and questions reflected in this sample.



Several example questions from the largest categories above include:

Personal Growth/Living Well: “How do you love someone your entire life?” “Is violence ever justified?”

Theology, History, & Concepts: “Why is there so much suffering in this world? What is evil?” “Is there free will?”

Compassion & Hope in a Challenging World: “How can I bridge political differences with loved ones?” “In such a divisive world, how can we begin to heal the divide?”

Social Justice: “Please discuss the difference between ‘religion’ and ‘social justice.’” “What do we tell our children about climate change when science points to such dire forecasts?”

Spirituality/Spiritual Practices: “What constitutes a spiritual practice? What is its power in our lives?” “What are some ways to use ritual well, so that it feels meaningful to you?”

The team that plans our Sunday services (which includes Glen Thomas Rideout, Lindasusan Ulrich, Cassandra Hartley, Allison Halerz, and myself) will be taking a close look at all the questions submitted, and, in the coming months, we will work towards incorporating the major themes and specific questions into future Sunday services that we craft for you.

Thank you for having participated in our annual Question Box service!