



**Wespath**  
BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

## 2021 Clergy Well-Being Survey Highlights

The well-being of United Methodist clergy affects the entire connection, including the families, congregations and communities they serve.

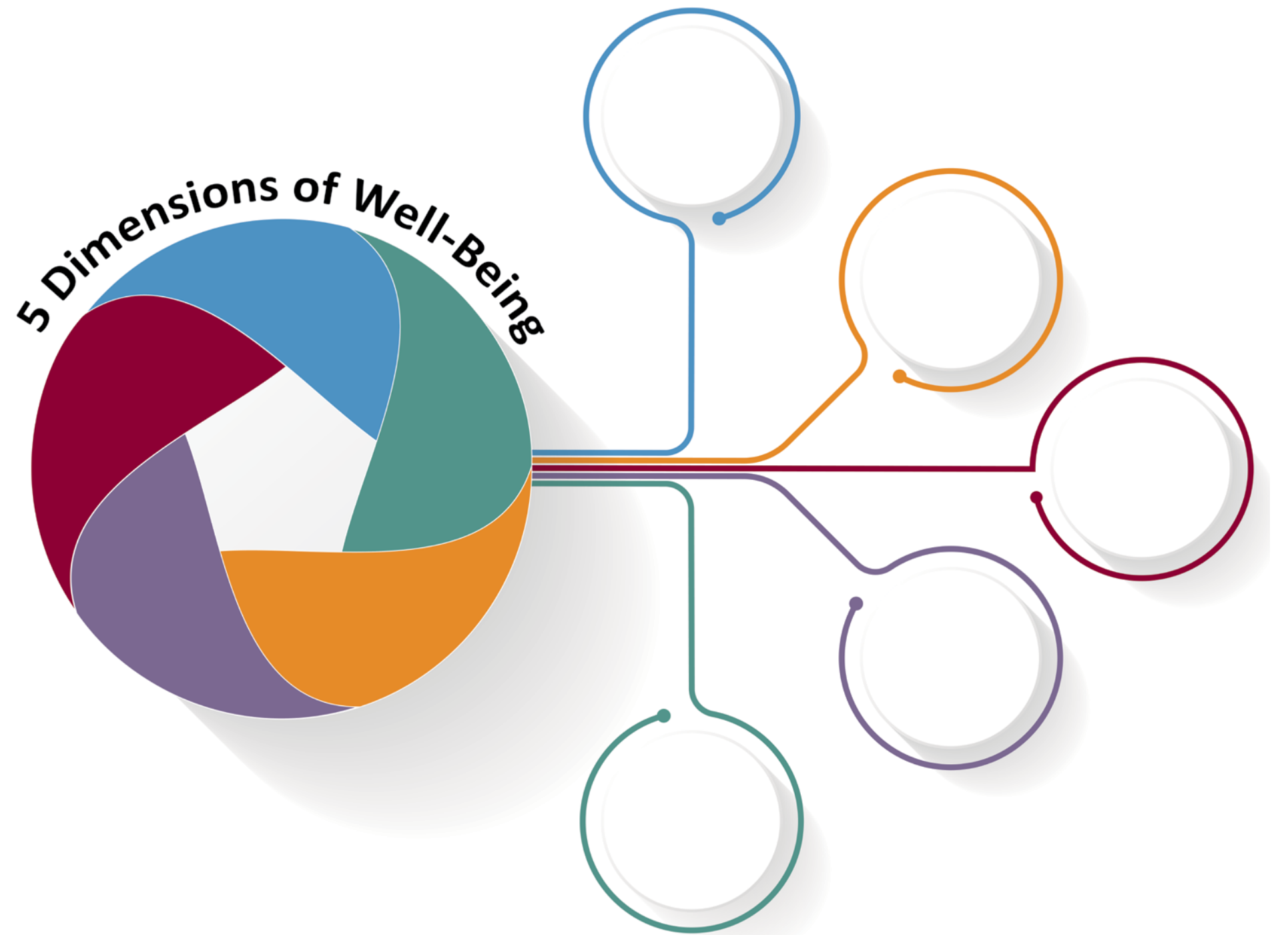
Wespath supports well-being with a focus on five dimensions of physical, emotional, spiritual, social and financial well-being. To ensure we deliver programs tailored to the needs of our participants, Wespath recently conducted its sixth Clergy Well-Being Survey. Launched in 2012, this biennial survey provides meaningful feedback on the current state of clergy well-being across all dimensions.

2021  
CLERGY  
WELL-BEING  
SURVEY

## Past decade shows decline in well-being for UM clergy

Since the 2012 survey, there has been a steady decline across almost all dimensions of well-being of UM clergy. The 2021 survey continues this negative trend with an even steeper decline compared to 2019, showing the dramatic impact COVID-19, social/racial injustice and the ongoing uncertainty within the UMC has had on clergy well-being.

To see survey results broken down by the **FIVE DIMENSIONS**, click on each dimension.





## Physical Dimension— Obesity, diabetes and hypertension on the rise



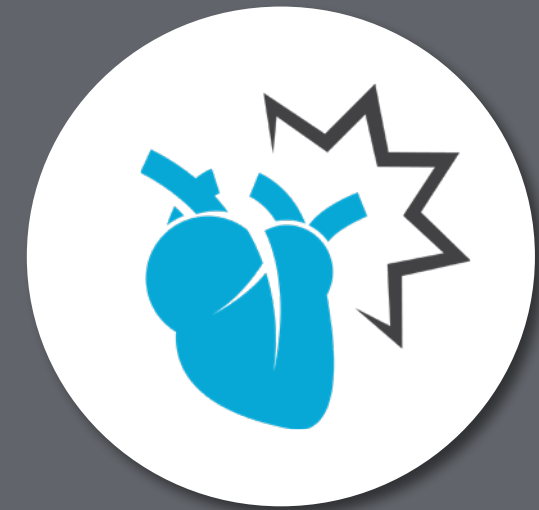
**47%**

Have a body mass index  
(BMI) > 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\*



**26%**

With diabetes or  
pre-diabetes



**33%**

With hypertension or  
pre-hypertension

\* According to the CDC, adult BMI greater than or equal to 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>\* is considered obese and increases risk for a number of health conditions.



## Emotional Dimension— Increase in depression and stress is alarming



**14%**

Report suffering  
from depression

**34%**

Are experiencing  
functional difficulty from  
depressive symptoms

### Top 4 functional depressive symptoms

- 1) Sleep troubles
- 2) Feeling down or hopeless
- 3) Little interest or pleasure in activities
- 4) Trouble concentrating

**Almost half (45%) report feeling stress in the past month**

### Top measures include:

- 45%** feeling like things were not going their way
- 36%** not feeling “on top of things”
- 27%** feeling more nervous and stressed



## Social Dimension— Work/life balance and social stressors increasing



**25%**

Report not feeling understood  
by family and friends



**52%**

Report work-related stress



**42%**

Report work isolation



# Spiritual Dimension— Spiritual vitality and well-being are diminishing



## Fewer feel the presence of God in their daily life

**61%** ↓ 5 percentage points  
Feel the presence and power of God in the ordinary

**51%** ↓ 6 percentage points  
Feel that events are unfolding according to God's plan



## Fewer feel the presence of God in ministry

**70%** ↓ 6 percentage points  
In planning and leading worship

**79%** ↓ 5 percentage points  
When sharing in the sacraments

And, while overall spiritual well-being is declining, more than 85% still find strength and comfort in their faith and more than 80% feel a sense of purpose in life and that their life has been productive.



## Financial Dimension— Financial well-being is improving



**35%**

Are not stressed about finances—  
the lowest result in 10 years!



**59%**

Feel on track for a comfortable  
retirement—also improving!

# Demographic differences highlight disparities in age, race, gender and other areas



## At higher risk for **PHYSICAL** well-being issues

- Men
- Older clergy
- Black clergy
- Clergy working in a smaller church

## At higher risk for **EMOTIONAL** well-being issues

- Women
- Younger clergy (especially those with children)
- White clergy

## Lower income clergy at higher risk for both **PHYSICAL** and **SOCIAL** well-being issues

Cabinet-level Church leaders (bishops and district superintendents) report better emotional, social and spiritual well-being



# What's Next?



In line with our mission of *Caring For Those Who Serve*, Wespeth takes your feedback seriously and is taking action to stem these downward trends and better support your overall well-being. We're concentrating our efforts in several areas:

- Enhancing our mental/emotional health programs by improving access to one-on-one counseling. For example, HealthFlex participants now have access to online therapy via **Talkspace** through the EAP.
- Facilitating listening sessions with clergy and Church leaders to better understand the systemic issues causing the decline in clergy's well-being and how to address them
- Working across the denomination to create partnerships to combine energy, efforts and focus on improving clergy well-being

**YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS:** Tell us what more we can do to help you with your overall well-being at [wellnessteam@wespath.org](mailto:wellnessteam@wespath.org).

**Click to discover well-being tools and resources:**

- **Physical**
- **Emotional**
- **Social**
- **Spiritual**
- **Financial**