

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES AS OGMC CONGREGATION

Listening report, June 9, 2019

VERY STRONG AFFIRMATION FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- We care deeply for each other, will support each other in crisis/needs. We are part of the 'Family of God', and we are "family" for many who have no other family members close by
- We highly value adult SS class participation, provides support in smaller group setting, strong and life-long friendships
- Children's ministry, Christian Ed, Biblical instruction/training, Bible quizzing, Bible bonanza, etc
- Adult small fellowship groups, discipleship training, care groups, Missional training, etc.
- Excellent music program, many musically gifted people, many people involved in music ministry, over-all there is appreciation for the balance/blend of style in worship music
- Our VBS program has been hallmark of OGMC, community outreach, positive influence for many
- Strong youth group ministry, opportunities for service and learning, involvement in national conventions, and value the mentoring program for our youth
- Many gifted professional people giving leadership; we "trust" our leadership; we are well organized
- Historically strong support for missions, 'across the street and around the world'

AFFIRMATION FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- Appreciate emotional and financial support for our college students, and young adults in service ministry, nationally and around the world
- OGMC has historically been a generous church, supportive of Conference and Denominational programs and ministries; and strong financial support of our local Church programs/ministries
- Many foster/adoptive families, support of each other, strong sense of call to this ministry
- Stability of strong, multi-generational families, bringing continuity and support to the congregation
- Solid Biblical preaching/teaching by pastors and lay leaders, Christian Ed leaders/teachers
- Strong sense of commitment to Christ and His Church, as well as commitment to one another
- Leadership has handled controversial issues fairly, been good listeners to all perspectives/opinions
- We have maintained a good theologically conservative stance, yet been able to transition away from the rigid legalistic background of 75 years ago, we are much more gracious, flexible, and open now
- We seem to be a pretty emotionally healthy group, not burdened with much systemic anxiety

SOME PAINFUL QUESTIONS/CONCERNS:

- Grief over the fact that so many persons/families have chosen to leave our Congregation in the past several years, their leaving has been painful, and not always clearly understood
- We understand the reasoning for going back to one worship service, but some have nostalgia for the informality and relaxed style of the second service
- What can be done to keep our Young Adults involved in our Congregation? We feel the void of this age group not being strongly involved
- Although many new persons coming into the Congregation have felt very accepted, there are some people do not feel fully emotionally included, due to not coming from traditional Mennonite background or any faith at all, or living outside the West Liberty area, or not being part of the 'inner' traditional multi-generational families, or from different social/cultural background
- Not all people like the 'meet and greet' times during service, it seems disruptive of worshipful flow
- Significant grief and concern regarding the theological direction MC USA is going, and our involvement in the future of the denomination, as well as support of its institutions
- Some discomfort with the process of filling positions of service in the Congregation; difficulty recruiting; the challenge of matching persons' skills/gifts with service needs; or in other cases, not being used in areas for which a person may have volunteered and would like to serve