



Westminster Presbyterian Church Congregational Research Survey Results

We invited the entire congregation of 1,300+ members to participate online and via paper and approximately 220 people *completed* the survey between May 22 and June 5.

In reality, only certain demographics within the congregation responded. Those who completed the survey were more likely to be over fifty-five years of age, a member of Westminster for more than fifteen years, and although there were responses across the breadth of in-person and online worship services, more likely to prefer a traditional service.

Very few surveys were submitted by those who have families with children under the age of eighteen, are under 50 years of age and newer to Westminster.

Please know that the voices and passions of all generations must and will be honored in this big, diverse congregation. We cannot assume the survey results speak for everyone and seek to honor all voices and ideas to shape who we will become. As a result, one of our priorities is to find alternative ways to ensure we listen and learn from these sizeable and vital segments of our church body.

That stated, from those who shared their ideas we learned some very exciting things:

- **More than 63%** participate in mission/service activities offered by Westminster and other organizations. You stated that you feel called to serve and live out that call.
- You seek to participate in **education (46%)**, **group Bible study (36%)**, and **individual devotionals (25%)** offered by Westminster and outside the church.
- You like to participate in **small group activities at Westminster (41%)** and other organizations.

- Your faith influences a wide spectrum of your life. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low and 10 a strong indicator:

your faith forms your thoughts and actions from politics (6.9),
to how to engage with friends (8.2) and family (8.9),
manage your finances (7.0),
and attitudes towards social justice (8.1).

Your faith compels you to be open to people different from yourself (8.5)
and to serve others (8.9).

Faith informs your life goals (8.2)
and what you do at work or school (8.4).

Finally, faith shapes your willingness to grasp the promise of life eternal (8.9).

- Again, when asked on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being low and 10 reflecting strong agreement:

you feel called to serve (7.7)
and can find ways to serve at Westminster (7.5).

You feel cared for by Westminster (8.2)
and are excited about our future (7.5).

The highest rating (8.7) belongs to the statement that in the past twelve months your faith has grown. Despite the tumultuous prior twelve months, what a testament to this faith community's resilience and God's presence in your life.

The survey also invited you to offer comments in your own words to three questions:

1. When asked “**what would inspire you to serve**,” most often you indicate that “you need to be asked.” Two immediate thoughts come to my mind. If you are the person organizing a new event/project, please expect that a bulletin announcement or website article will not suffice. Relationships in this congregation matter and a personal invitation generates involvement. On the other hand, if you see something in the bulletin or hear of an event that is slightly interesting, please don’t wait to be asked. That puts an undue burden on those organizing events, and you might delight them with your curiosity.

You expressed a desire for “hands on mission.” Bravo. Your words confirm our experience that when we host mission/service opportunities with an ability for you to work with others at Westminster, you show up and work. Throughout the survey, we heard that we need to offer more hands-on service events.

2. We asked '**what types of mission/service you desire.**' Most often you request opportunities that are local, address food insecurity, and, as confirmed in the prior response, provide hands-on engagement.
3. Lastly, when asked "**what Westminster could do to be a bigger part of your life,**" write-in responses confirmed the desire for hands-on service and more types of small groups to be and work together.

A few of you confirmed that we are a very purple congregation. Some of you clearly wrote that you do not want to hear any liberal politics or about social justice – “just preach Jesus.” Others wrote of a keen desire to learn about racism and current political challenges from a Christian perspective – “just preach Jesus.” Despite what seems contrary perspectives you ultimately desire to draw closer to Jesus’ teachings and for his ministry to guide your life.

If this diverse congregation seeks common ground in Jesus, we can strengthen our polarized community as we unite in his service, regardless of partisan affiliations. As Presbyterians we affirm Jesus, alone, is head of the church. Our Reformed theology also affirms God’s spirit will inspire our understanding and response to scripture. When we gather around the holy text with the desire to follow Jesus we become the shining examples in this community.

Friends, I am grateful for your candor and your hope for our future. I welcome your comments, questions, push-back.

In faith,

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