



## **The Mission of God in a Time of a Pandemic: A Study of Congregations within the Michigan District**

It has been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of the citizens of Michigan in dramatic ways. The state plan for minimizing the spread of the COVID-19 virus included a strict shelter-in-place order and the closure of all but the most essential businesses. Anecdotal reports from the Michigan District's Mission and Ministry Facilitators (CMMFs) have indicated that the ministries in the Michigan District had widely divergent responses to the pandemic and the government's shelter-in-place orders. The CMMFs have shared that some congregations experienced dramatic declines in member engagement and financial support while others remained relatively stable; a few congregations have indicated that their sphere of mission engagement grew during the pandemic.

The purpose of this study is to document the impact of the pandemic on the congregational ministries in the District and to provide a statistical analysis on the data to determine if any relationships exist between the congregation's context, response, and membership trends during the pandemic. Should the study results support the assertion that such relationships exist, it may be possible to develop specific recommendations for action that will enable congregations to develop a beneficial strategy for mission and ministry in a future crisis.

Individual congregational data will not be shared with the District as a whole. The statistical analysis and observations will be made freely available to members of the District. We hope that all who participate in the survey will provide an honest and accurate assessment of your ministry's statistics and their personal experiences on ministry during a time of the pandemic. Our goal is not to second guess decisions, but to understand the decisions that were made and attempt to identify and understand the impact of the decisions on the ministry.

The survey has two parts.

- The first part is an online survey to be completed by a representative or representatives of each congregation. The congregational survey provides an opportunity for the congregation to share statistics regarding worship attendance, types of services offered, and financial trends for each month from January 2020 to April 2021. That survey can be accessed using this link: [Pandemic Response Survey](#).
- The second survey is a brief online survey in which the called workers of the District and one lay leader from each congregation share their thoughts regarding their ministry's response to the pandemic and the ministry's current and future challenges/opportunities. We would appreciate all called workers, staff, and one lay leader from each congregation completing the survey. It can be accessed using this survey link: [Staff Survey Link](#).

We would appreciate if all congregations of the Michigan District would participate in the study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rev. Dr. Todd Jones at [todd.jones@michigandistrict.org](mailto:todd.jones@michigandistrict.org) or 734.213.4256.

Thank you.

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