

Listening Meetings Question 6: Is there anything you would like to add that hasn't been included in the previous questions?

- Open hearts, open minds, LOCKED doors
  - Programming/software issues
  - Only one person in charge
  - Need ONE designated door open
  - Need larger discussion about usher training
- Leslie is not part of the FUMC community/Loveland community
- Why have people left? Loss of tradition, when some people leave their friends follow
- Younger people might/would answer these questions differently
- Enjoy Lee's sermons, would have liked to hear her more during Leslie's renewal leave
- We continue to operate at a deficit; this year we used dedicated accounts to balance budget; next year we will be at a 10% loss
- How much longer can we afford two full-time pastors and paid music staff?
- Regarding giving—sometimes people pledge, but can't plan for contingencies and may not be able to pay (may need personal contact)
- Some continue to give, but don't show up to service (may need personal contact)
- Personal follow-up to register—how is information used?
- Do we know how many people Zoom?
- We don't attract young people
- Too many doors in building—need greeters
- Go to/call people specifically and ask them to volunteer where needed
- Have groups take care of hospitality (bells, committees)
- People on/chairing committees shouldn't have to do double duty with hospitality
- There is a disconnect between 'giving' and 'congregational care'
- We don't know what the pastors do
- We have lost a lot of members over the past couple of years—why? (Some may not like having two women in lead positions)
- We miss robes for the choir, pastors
- The UM Foundation is based on bad principles. Rules need to be changed (Foundation was created after church burned down; now we have insurance; Foundation has paid for some very expensive things such as the parking lot) *(information about the Foundation was sent out to this group; it is available on the website in the Church Council tab)*
- Current members are all old
- We need to be open to change—we don't have to do things the way we have always done them
- Have conversation with Trinity about possible merger (talked about Unity and combined Summer Bible School)
- We need *some* change to attract more families
- The church is the people; we need to take charge
- Perhaps Leslie didn't get to know church population when she first came; she is not part of Loveland or FUMC community
- Congregation doesn't feel they have been heard
- Feels like when Leslie came, changes happened immediately
- Feels like a disconnect between pastor(s) and congregation
- We have lost ushers
- We need a Worship Committee; do we get to vote on things? Who makes decisions?
- Doing service lets people know we are in the community
- Need a bulletin! //
- Obviously, everyone won't get what they want with so many opposing ideas
- Better publicity—door hangars?

- We need to merge with Trinity UMC—financial & membership; if we merge, there will be enough people for two services
- Is funding gone for college age/young adults?
- Sermons need to be modernized
- Sunday school is the same time as worship
- Locked church is too restricting //
- More modern music
- Like music, but some is overwhelming, seems to drag
- I want to clap for music (make a joyful noise), say, 'amen' ///
- Open services to all faiths, welcome everyone
- Once a month have a contemporary service and one with liturgy
- Investigate effects of Zooming; how to reach those who Zoom to encourage active participation in the life of the church
- Do we follow up with those who used to come but don't now?
- Some may leave if they come and the church is too full; others may leave if it is too empty
- Invite Truscott parents to church
- Trinity is doing well with missions
- Why are people leaving for Mountain View?
- What missions do we have? (*Barry responded thoroughly to the person who asked this!*)
- Maybe instead of using the word 'volunteer,' ask everyone to pitch in
- Recovery groups need invitation; they are looking for spiritual support
- How can we embrace people with recovery/economic issues
- More than one option for Bible studies and other studies (book/theme)
- Recruiting volunteers should NOT be up to the pastors: WE ARE THE CHURCH
- When there is only one service, Sunday school workers miss worship
- When families leave, do we follow up and find out why?
- Why have we lost people?
- What are we doing to stem the flow?
- Need central sign up for helping with coffee, hospitality, etc
- Need our bulletins back (with information in addition to order of worship)
- 'Window' needs to be available each Sunday for everyone (more people would read and know what is going on)
- Can show videos with our children singing contemporary music
- Be more welcoming (don't protect 'your' seats)
- Locked doors are a HUGE issue for church services, church meetings, meetings such as NA  
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- Separate UNION from Family Outreach—site separation is a problem
- Miss FUMC representation with UNION—HUGE issue at this time
- We need a positive relationship between FUMC and Trinity UMC; is this in jeopardy?
- Embrace LGBTQ-OASIS: invite congregation to events: June 4<sup>th</sup> event (Pride and summer kickoff); more evidence of inclusion in church
- o I pray for all our churches because all are struggling to find ground that is changing very fast.
- o I'll give you a call
- o I think the emphasis on LGBTQ+ issues is distracting from our roles as leaders in the community of faith. The Bible tells us to love all people and we should. However, we do not need to condone the behaviors that the Bible tells us are wrong or immoral. We need to look to God for direction on how to act and ask Him for wisdom and discernment on what we should be doing and how so we remain in step with His plan for our lives
- o According to a PRRI poll Axios recently reported on (<https://axios.com/2023/05/16/rising-number-americans-switch-religions>), the main two reasons people change their church affiliations are difference in beliefs and treatment of LGBTQ+ people. As part of the largest

non-credal denomination in the world, and with our congregation's traditional focus on the gospel of love (welcome, community and outreach) over perching narrow doctrinal formulations, we could be attractive to a lot more people if we get back to playing our strengths.

As a transgender gay man who has long and up-close experience with how our congregation handles inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, I have to let you know it's a mixed bag. We want to try to be welcoming toward and inclusive of members of the LGBTQ+ community, and sometimes, in some of our congregation's smaller groups, with some gay and lesbian and bi folks, we even succeed; but there's more and deeper work to be done, congregation-wide, to really get this right. The risk of not getting it right is dire: about 20% of GenZ is part of the LGBTQ+ community, and full inclusion is a non-negotiable for most of GenZ and Millennials. The good thing is, our congregation has the skills and interests to get back on track—we just need to refocus on our traditional strengths on the gospel of love and openness to our community.