

At our last Presbytery meeting we asked the following questions and recorded answers from members of Presbytery. We arranged the answers according to themes that we saw. If you would like to see the answers without being broken down into themes, that document is available on request from Heartland Presbytery.

***1. What is one concrete commitment that you see Heartland Presbytery holding as vital to its identity?***

**Values**

**22 responses**

1. Aggressiveness and Inclusiveness
2. Being the Body of Christ
3. Connectional nature
4. Connectional
5. Connectional
6. Community
7. Compassion for and care for one another
8. Cross-Cultural
9. Decades long progressive inclusive strain
10. Diversity
11. Diversity
12. Effort to be inclusive
13. Fellowship and Friendship Inclusivity
14. Justice/Awareness
15. LGBT Community inclusion
16. Listening and understanding with regard to mission commitment or lack of it.
17. Reconciliation
18. Revitalization
19. Should be to lead the congregations in a unified direction and make sure all the congregations feel involved.
20. Trust
21. Urban/town/country/rural/suburban
22. Welcoming- broader receptiveness.

**Local Mission: 20 responses**

1. Mission Support is vital
2. Front Porch Alliance IHN
3. LAMP- need community to know we're there.
4. Neema Church
5. New Worshipping Communities
6. Programing
7. PUMIN- meaningful work, love fund
8. Relocating Presbytery offices to Linwood site and LAMP
9. Resource conduit to larger church
10. Revitalization of Linwood place.

- 11.Rural Churches who receive support
- 12.Support for Racial Ethnic Congregations
- 13.Serving Downtown K.C.
- 14.Urban Immigrant ministry network
- 15.Urban Ministry, but that leaves some people out
- 16.Urban ministry important to those churches involved, but ??
- 17.Urban and Immigrant ministry
- 18.Urban Network Support
- 19.Urban Core Office

**Education/Connection/Support related answers: 10 responses**

- 20.Encourage more attendance
- 21.Communication with Presbytery Churches to help them ID their futures
- 22.Bringing value to its congregations
- 23.Calling people into leadership for Presbytery
- 24.Grow and other educational events
- 25.Help redefine church
- 26.Inner city and “outer churches as well” (inclusive)
- 27.Stewardship Events
- 28.Service to member congregations
- 29.Support of churches

**International Mission 10 responses**

- 30.Maya Quiche Partnership
- 31.Maya Quiche Guatamala
- 32.Maya Quiche
- 33.Maya Quiche
- 34.Maya Quiche
- 35.Maya Quiche
- 36.Maya Quiche
- 37.Pakistan
- 38.Thwake
- 39.Thwake Village

**Youth/Camp Related: 9 responses**

- 40.Heartland Camp
- 41.Heartland Camp
- 42.Heartland camp
- 43.Heartland Camp
- 44.Heartland Center
- 45.Heartland Center
- 46.Camp is outstanding
- 47.Christian Ed Youth
- 48.Heartland Center

## **Uncertainty or Questions**

**7 responses**

49. Does presbytery support the missions of its member congregations or do the ministry?
50. Don't know yet
51. Couldn't come up with any
52. Meetings and structure sometimes diverts energy (can we do it differently?)
53. Name our core values
54. Review our systems and structures
55. What does it mean to be a Presbytery?

## **2. *What is the Identity of Heartland Presbytery as you understand it?***

### **Answers emphasizing an ambiguous/confused or lack of identity 16**

- 1) Connected, yet disconnected- some congregations don't see "connection" as positive thing- more about hoops to jump through.
- 2) Confused, ambiguous, undefined
- 3) Defining- can't define now, in midst of change.
- 4) Depends on one's perspective
- 5) Not sure
- 6) Not sure
- 7) No stated Identity/perceived/communicated.
- 8) Don't know that there is one- what is the unifying vision?
- 9) Hard to find 1 identity because so many groups represented
- 10) ID has shifted in last 5 years, more inclusive, less divided.
- 11) Identity and mission not clear- need this named clearly and repeated often so we the churches can get behind it.
- 12) Question still in need of an answer.
- 13) Urban/Rural
- 14) Union
- 15) Unsure
- 16) We need to "rebrand ourselves"

### **Answers Focusing on Function of Presbytery 15**

- 17) Administrative role.
- 18) Connectional
- 19) Connectional
- 20) Congregational partnerships- grassroots future opportunities to work together
- 21) Democratic participation
- 22) Midwestern location
- 23) Need to take into account our history as a Presbytery, how we've functioned.
- 24) Network
- 25) Place to find Pastoral leadership
- 26) Representative body that serves congregations in NW MO and NE KS
- 27) Resources
- 28) Some hold to the tradition of being a part of something bigger.
- 29) Support
- 30) What is a presbytery?- What is the main function?
- 31) Worship together with commissioners from other churches.

### **Answers emphasizing a positive reputation 7**

- 32) A strong presbytery with a good reputation on the national level.
- 33) Desire to "be Christ" in new and creative ways.
- 34) Heartland was known as meanest in past, openness now.
- 35) Helps local churches, do good works together that are beyond individual churches

- 36) Inclusive of all
- 37) Open hearted, open minded.
- 38) Warm and Welcoming

**Answers emphasizing reputation (negative) 5**

- 39) Many detached churches
- 40) Fractured
- 41) Presbytery not needed-what good are they.
- 42) Presbytery in the rest of the country, we're in violent inclusion.
- 43) We're thought of as "Heartless".

**Answers emphasizing theological purpose or question 3**

- 44) Body of Christ
- 45) Heart of Christ in this portion of the Land.
- 46) How are we a church?

### **3. *What do you think are the mission priorities of Heartland Presbytery?***

#### **Urban Ministries 9**

1. Immigrant and Urban ministry
2. Immigrant and Urban Ministry
3. Interserve in St. Joseph
4. Open Table
5. PUMIN
6. Urban Network Churches
7. Urban Core- that's what we hear about.
8. Urban Immigrant network
9. Urban Immigrant Ministry Network

#### **Church Support 8**

10. Be Mission
11. Church Development
12. Education- like GROW
13. Heartland Presbytery should be the base/support for the local congregations providing guidance, leadership and education. There if we need help
14. Should be a coach, keeps people playing fair.- also cheerleader-tell the story well- growth and vitality, not decline. Also the rallying cry for churches to work to gether- shared mission. Congregations need to highlight local work.
15. Stewardship
16. Supporting clergy/serving churches, CREs and CCEs
17. To support churches

#### **International Support 8**

18. Guatemala
19. Guatemala Maya Quiche
20. Guatemala Partnership
21. Maya Quiche
22. Maya Quiche partnership
23. Thwake Village

#### **Ideas, Questions or where we think we should be 8**

1. Mission
2. Mission Giving
3. Connectionality
4. Denomination's Social Justice priorities need to be articulated
5. Not made clear to churches, like giving catalog
6. presbytery should revisit their mission statement and make it memorable, which becomes portable. Nobody in our group knew the mission statement.
7. Sanctuary movement.
8. Strong LGBTQ Commitment

9. Unchurched, unconnected are next door/across the street.
10. What are the mission priorities of the Presbytery? Of the people? Are they current or long-held traditions?
11. if you knew nothing about our presbytery, you would walk away sensing that we are very committed to mission, but we are behind in finances toward mission.

**Youth Programing** **5**

12. Heartland Camp
13. Camp
14. Camp
15. Camp
16. Youth Ministry

**Evangelism and New Church Development** **3**

17. Sanctuary Place
18. Outreach
19. Outreach-Evangelism- a coordinated campaign/effort very relationally based.

#### ***4. Where do you see us not meeting the mission priorities of Heartland Presbytery.***

##### **Unclear about mission/priorities/identity**

**15**

- 1) Churches don't know that the Presbytery has a mission
- 2) Collective identity is not clear
- 3) Fuzzy about mission
- 4) Mission strategies haven't been articulated clearly enough.
- 5) Mission not made clear to churches- make giving catalogs, booklets for mission projects
- 6) Need to set three year mission priorities then re-evaluate- This will mean saying no to some things, letting go of others to better focus our resources.
- 7) Not setting mission priorities and trying to fund everything just a little bit.
- 8) Not clear mission priorities of the Presbytery? Transparency? Process?
- 9) Presbytery should get behind one or two things that can make a difference.
- 10) There has been no strategic plan for years.
- 11) We don't know what the mission priorities are.
- 12) We need to know the mission
- 13) What is the unifying vision?
- 14) comes to every Presbytery and on two committees and even he has a vague idea of what Presbytery does and stands for.
- 15) Zero out mission budget then figure out our priorities with what we have.

##### **Poor Communication**

**15**

- 16) Communication is severely lacking. No face to face communication with congregants- need more contact.
- 17) Communication with existing churches to identify future.
- 18) Communication- more
- 19) Communicate to each church
- 20) Communication, clear and concise
- 21) Communicate what the mission is.
- 22) Does every church REALLY understand where mission \$s go and what DO they DO?
- 23) Don't understand per capita "head tax", shared mission, where it goes.
- 24) How do we support the mission already happening? Do we even know what's going on in our churches? Who has even heard of the Sanctuary Place?
- 25) Little to no contact in rural churches (about 50)- (maybe form regional group)?
- 26) Video team to show Urban Network, Guatemala to encourage participation and help be engaged.
- 27) Need to advertise self.
- 28) Not knowing enough about what other churches are doing so that there can be cooperation.
- 29) Poor information distribution
- 30) Branding- need vision in a tag line then mission in a story or two.

##### **Disconnectedness**

**12**



- 31) Hard to rebuild connections when they've been broken, especially for a long time- depends on congregational leadership. Even small concrete things (insert that says where our money goes, talking about what it means to be Presbyterian) can make a difference in building connections.
- 32) He feels like being so far away in St. Joe that all the events of Heartland Presbytery are all far away in KC since his congregation is elderly and they can't easily attend.
- 33) events cost money and that might be prohibitive to attend special activities
- 34) Need for synergy between individual congregations- lacking
- 35) Need more face to face/ relational- not about getting info to congregations
- 36) People don't reach out, don't know how to reach out, especially in rural areas or churches that are disconnected.
- 37) Small churches feel disconnected
- 38) We need a model of encouraging involvement in the church( i.e. worship, education, financial resources, etc.)
- 39) Where are the personal touches?
- 40) Presbytery has been very supportive when asked, but otherwise my congregation feels untethered from Presbytery.
- 41) View Presbytery only shows up when things go wrong?
- 42) Rural churches
- 43) presbytery committees could be more flexible with when and where they meet, said Michael to help other churches feel included and able to be more involved

### **Presbytery's Financial/administrative Support for churches** **9**

- 44) Decrease recently to PUMIN grants.
- 45) Do more with church redevelopment/merging smaller churches to build more cohesiveness.
- 46) Giving
- 47) How do we include validated ministers? How do we invite them to participate in the mission of the church?
- 48) Is there accountability for the mission we are supporting?
- 49) Lack of Leadership
- 50) Lack of Leadership
- 51) Presbytery falling short on recognizing needs of struggling churches and responding to them.
- 52) Support congregations/leaders

### **Addressing Social Justice Issues** **5**

- 53) Instead of conversation, we should be doing something concerning mission
- 54) How can we change our culture? Prioritize and strategize- check out Western Pennsylvania Pres. Schenengo Presbytery has changed course.
- 55) Acceptance
- 56) Issues facing our culture- immigration, refugees race relations, open and affirming.
- 57) Social Justice- specific components (poverty, etc . . .)

**Churches not supporting Presbytery with resources**

**4**

- 58) Individual churches not discipling children BUT Heartland camps doing this well- kids aren't coming to church.
- 59) Stewardship
- 60) Need more lay participation.
- 61) Filling committee slots

**Structural Questions**

**3**

- 62) Need to get creative, encourage ministries to share staff.
- 63) Presbytery Staff- is it sustainable for us to have the staff we have? Can we support it?
- 64) Why do we have 28 vacancies? What does that point to?

**Evangelism**

**2**

- 65) Structure hasn't supported a (unified) outreach
- 66) Church membership decline

**Too much focus on youth**

**1**

- 67) presbytery promotes too many youth programs

**5. *Where do you see us meeting the mission priorities of Heartland Presbytery?***

**Planning/Administrative            3**

- 1) Bringing to reality those desired areas of need, identifying resources to mobilize action
- 2) We write checks well.
- 3) Consistent involvement.

**Communication                        3**

- 4) Communication via the connection
- 5) Communication
- 6) Serves as communication vehicle across the presbytery.

**Uncertain                                3**

- 7) Difficult to say, when the mission is unclear
- 8) Individual congregations are meeting mission priorities.
- 9) Need a mission before we can say.

**Particular ministries                4**

- 10) Camp, traveling camp.
- 11) Maya Quiche
- 12) Need places for food and shelter, then church comes.
- 13) Urban ministries.

**What we hope for:                    1**

- 14) What mission do we need- one on one. Inclusive. Open table- listen to others- unchurched.