

What is Parker UMC?

Earlier this year, we held two different types of sessions, asking for congregational input about Parker UMC. This one-page sheet attempts to summarize what was expressed during those sessions.

The first, 30–45-minute gatherings, generated results to a survey that asked for opinions about various parts of our life together here at PUMC. Each question had multiple sub-components, but in general -

- Quality of Sunday Morning Worship** – there was a positive "Strongly/Somewhat Agree" response.
- Connection with Children, Youth and Adult Ministries** - showed mostly a "Don't know" response.
- Strong Leadership, Connection and Facility** – there was a "Strongly Agree" response.
- Good Personal Engagement with PUMC** – was more of a "Somewhat Agree" response.

Later in the spring, we gathered for a 2-hour session, led by the Rev. Dr. Amy Gearhart. During that longer session, we asked for more specifics about our strengths, our neighbors, and our ministries. The questions were more open in scope, and the resulting responses provide a wonderful landscape of the broad diversity of opinions here at Parker UMC. For every comment highlighting our building, there was a different comment focusing on program. For every comment praising our worship and music, there was a celebration of our outreach. Even though none of the comments seemed to directly contradict other comments, it does reveal the wide range of faith journeys and practical faith expressions that are an integral part of our church life here.

Again, in summarized form –

“Who is our neighbor?” – More than the obvious geographical answers, we received responses that mentioned age groups (retirees, children), occupations (healthcare workers, co-workers), and new area residents.

“How will we learn our neighbors’ needs?” – there were almost 50 different ways and places offered relating to how we could listen to our neighbors.

“What are the core competencies of Parker UMC?” – In addition to our physical facility, comments were made that largely focused on family and children’s ministries.

“What has God given us to meet our neighbors’ needs?” – In addition, again, to our physical facility, we heard about our outreach programs and activities open to the entire Parker area community.

“How am I called to lead/contribute in this season of PUMC’s life and ministry?” – This question produced another wide variety of responses that seemed to list “ways that I can contribute” as well as what “others should be doing.”

The last part of that two-hour session provided opportunities for miscellaneous comments and words of wisdom. There was no obvious recurring theme, but numerous comments were made that centered around using our physical facility more, welcoming more people, reaching out and connecting with neighbors, and more communications within our church family.

What can Parker UMC become?

None of the conversations focused on this question, but rather looked at what our church is today that can be used to build into that future. The task now before us is to define the values at the core of our church and the vision that we see as our future.