

Local Church Survey Step-by-Step Guide

- 1. Request the Survey Monkey Link:** Contact David McPherson at DMcPherson@DSUMC.org to obtain the “live” Survey Monkey link and with any questions about the survey.
- 2. Set a goal for how many responses you would like to receive.** Test churches experienced response rates ranging from 22% to 69% of average worship attendance. We suggest setting a goal of at least 30-40%. Feedback indicates that an aggressive goal can be a source of excitement and a strong motivator for the congregation to rally around. The church with the highest response rate commented that it felt like a “get out the vote” campaign for the future of the church.
- 3. Set a beginning and an ending date for the survey.** A 3-4 week survey period should be sufficient. Make sure that everyone is aware of the closing date, and send the congregation reminders as the end date nears. This will help keep the survey before the congregation and increase response.
- 4. Present the survey to your staff, Church Council, and the congregation. Use Sunday services, classes, emails, newsletters, and personal invitations to introduce the survey to the congregation. Encourage participation and use reminders throughout the survey period.** Consider asking your staff, Council members and their teams to commit to taking it. Ideally, also identify a committed lay person to lead the survey effort by becoming the point person for questions, by driving personal invitations, and helping with reminders. Effort and determination of both the pastor and a designated survey leader led to the highest test results of 154 responses, representing more than two-thirds of the church’s 222 worship attendees.

Explain that having the opinion of everyone in the congregation is important because results will help guide church strategies for mission and ministry in the coming year and beyond. Reinforce that the survey will give real information for decision-making and yield better results than assumptions. By repeating the survey annually in years to come, progress can be measured and problem areas of church culture identified and improved. Results will help in development of strategies and plans best directed toward growth and vitality. Reinforce to the congregation that everyone should be part of determining the future of the church.

- 5. Distribute the Survey Monkey link in church bulletins, emails, and newsletters.** Make sure to mention the need to hit “Done” at the end of the survey in order for it to submit. Have hard copies of the survey PDF available at services and in the church office for members of the congregation who may be uncomfortable taking it electronically, and recruit several people with I-Pads to be on hand after services for people who would like to take the survey electronically before they leave. Also consider distributing hard copies and making I-Pads available during/after classes.

Following services, have a person available at each door to remind people of the survey and ensure that they've received hard copies or know where to find I-Pad access, if needed. Finally, identify a team of volunteers to type handwritten responses online into the Survey Monkey link.

- 6. Notify David McPherson in advance of your survey's ending date.** When your survey closes, reports will be developed to include bar charts and tables for multiple choice questions, along with full text responses and Word Clouds for comment boxes. PDF, PowerPoint, and Excel formats will be provided as options for you to use in interpreting and sharing information.

Note that contents of your survey results will be held in strict confidence. How information is shared will be at your discretion. Should you need help in interpreting results, David McPherson and your District Superintendent will be available at your request.

- 7. After receiving reports, review results with your church leadership.** Determine areas of strength and weakness. Prioritize areas of focus, set goals, and develop action steps to address them in the upcoming year.
- 8. Share survey results and plans with your congregation.** You may choose to share information in an open meeting so that your congregation can be part of discussion on your assessment and plans. You may also wish to email the report with your comments to the congregation. Test churches indicate that a motivating factor in people responding to the survey was knowing that results would be shared with the entire congregation.
- 9. Repeat the survey annually.** This will help measure progress toward your goals and identify any new concerns that may have surfaced during the year.