

Personal Opinion Survey

As one aspect of our planning for the future, we want to identify the **core values** that drive most of our congregation's thinking, planning, and actions.

Core values are deeply ingrained thought-patterns that motivate behaviors:

- To understand the powerful nature of core values, think of an apple core: the seeds in that core are the apple tree's core values; these seeds create the future.
- A congregation's core values are those foundational beliefs and convictions that are extremely meaningful to the majority of its leaders and members.
- Usually unwritten and unstated, a congregation expresses its core values (deeply ingrained thought-patterns) in behaviors such as the following:
- Ministries to which most of the members are willing—or unwilling—to give time and energy
- Programs and activities with which most of the members feel comfortable—or uncomfortable
- Policy-setting and planning decisions that key laypersons vote for—or against
- Clergy and staff member actions that key laypersons affirm—or oppose

Unfortunately, a congregation's core values are always partially invisible to its leaders, submerged in “the way we have always done things here.”

The best way to surface a congregation's invisible core values is to look at recent history: what has been happening during the last few years?

We are NOT asking your opinion on (a) what you personally think we OUGHT to do or (b) what you have heard leaders say we OUGHT to do.

We are asking your opinion on what has been happening during the last few years.

After completing your survey, please leave quietly. Place your survey in the box provided for that purpose as you leave the sanctuary. Please do not take it home with you. Please do not sign your name.

This survey intentionally asks for a quick, feeling-level response, rather than lengthy reflection.