

Cottage Meeting Listening Tour

1. What is the one thing that I – as the new pastor – need to know about this congregation?

2. What is one way that we are going to reach new people in this area?

3. What is one dream that you have for your church?

4. What is a question you would like to ask me?

5. What are you afraid I will do?

❖ **These numbers are not for the purpose of blame!**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Average worship attendance</u>
1999	Pastor Dan	240
2004*	Pastor Dan	260
2005	Pastor Lisa	250
2006	Pastor Lisa	250
2007	Pastor Lisa	260
2008	Pastor Lisa	280
2009	Pastor Lisa	280
2010*	Pastor Paul	225
2011	Pastor Paul	224
2012	Pastor Paul	223
2013	Pastor Paul	170

2014*	Pastor Chris	180
2015	Pastor Chris	164
2016	Pastor Chris	155
2017*	Pastor Doug	140

* Indicates a mid-year pastoral change

Reason for drop in numbers

- The recession of 2008 had a part to play on our numbers.
- The 2010 February “special church charge conference” to vote on a “building Committee Recommendation” that was passed and there was great momentum and excitement in the church only to find out one month later that Lisa was being moved – had a part to play in the numbers going down.
- Having pastors for 3-4 year appointments has a part to play in our numbers going down.
- Our church ministry mindset has shifted over those years as well. We have moved from being a congregation of volunteers actively involved in ministry to being a congregation paying people to do the ministry; and that mindset has also contributed to our decrease in numbers.

▪ **“HARD DECISIONS WE HAVE TO MAKE”**

From 2009 to 2017 we have gone from 280 in worship attendance to 140. We are no longer a growing thriving church.

We are ending the Saturday service.

We have to seriously discuss going to one Sunday service.

The reason why is not just financial!

- We need to reconnect as a body of believers;
- We need to reconnect as a unified family of God pursuing our mission with a singular focus and passion.
- We need to rediscover how to be the unified body of Christ God has called us to be here at PGUMC.
- We can no longer be all things to all people!
- We need to do less so we can accomplish more.

As we go through the hard changes we need to ask ourselves
Not what can the church do for me; instead what can I do for the church God has called me to be a part of?

The Good News is that we have every God given gift and talent and ability right here in our congregation to turn this situation around.

But it is going to require that all of us be willing:

- ✓ To make personal sacrifices,
- ✓ To be willing to get physically involved,
- ✓ To be willing to step out in faith
- ✓ To be willing to lead the charge of fulfilling our vision in areas we feel less than qualified to do so.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

- ⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
- ⁷ but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
- ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
- ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
- ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in
heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to

work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:1-13

Following the example of Jesus Christ is our goal ...it is also our challenge.

- There is nothing easy about it, but “**we all**” know that God is able to do more than we can ask or imagine. **Ephesians 3:20**
- We know that we can do “all” things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. **Philippians 4:13**
- We know that God works for the good of “all those” who love him. **Romans 8:23** And
- We know that God’s plans are to prosper us and not to harm us; to give us a hope and a future. **Jerimiah 29:11**

The goals and dreams we all have can only come to pass if we live our lives after the pattern that Jesus laid out for us.

I am not going to end this message with an emotional rah rah approach and try and get you all fired up.

Emotions fade away – but a quite deep resolve is what wins the day!

4 commitments we need to make towards each other:

1. Let us commit to being likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.
2. Let us commit to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than ourselves.
3. Let us commit to not only look to our own interest, but also to the interest of others.
4. Let us commit to having the same attitude of Jesus Christ that we would be willing to humble ourselves and take the very nature of a servant and become obedient to do whatever it is God would call us or ask us to do.