

# Summary of Listening Session Questions

## Des Moines

1. What hopes or longings arise in you when you hear about the idea of the creation of one Presbytery?

The overarching hopes and longings center on building a more purposeful, connected, and supportive presbytery that is financially stable, mission-focused, and open to creative change—while still honoring the diversity and autonomy of its member congregations.

2. What fears, griefs, or resistances do you notice – in yourself or in our Presbytery?

The main fears, griefs, and resistances revolve around losing local identity, diminished connection, uncertainty about staffing and finances, resistance to change, concerns for small churches, grief over potential loss of valued programs, and distrust in the decision-making process. These concerns highlight the importance of transparent communication, honoring local autonomy, and ensuring that all voices—especially those of smaller congregations—are heard and respected throughout the process.

3. How might a merger expand our capacity for mission, innovation, or support of small churches?

A merger has the potential to expand capacity for mission, innovation, and support of small churches by increasing resource sharing, fostering creative collaboration, providing targeted support, and enabling larger-scale projects. The key to realizing these benefits will be intentional design, clear communication, and a commitment to honoring the unique needs of all congregations, especially the small and rural ones.

4. What challenges to you foresee in the process if the three Presbyteries decide to become one.

The main challenges anticipated in merging the three presbyteries include communication and connection, geographic and logistical barriers, loss of local identity, financial and staffing concerns, cultural differences, ensuring support for small churches, decision-making and trust, and defining purpose. Addressing these challenges will require intentional planning, transparent communication, and a commitment to honoring the diversity and needs of all congregations.

**5. How would success be measured -  
not institutionally, but spiritually and missionally?**

Success, spiritually and missionally, is measured by the depth of faith, the sharing of God's love, growth in discipleship, active and creative mission in communities, and the ability to work together for God's purposes—rather than by institutional size or administrative achievements.

**6. What non-negotiables must be honored if we proceed?**

If the merger proceeds, it is essential to honor these non-negotiables: adherence to the Book of Order, respect for local autonomy, maintaining current staff and youth camps, focusing on the needs of congregations and mission, and ensuring transparent, equitable communication and decision-making. These priorities reflect the deeply held values and practical needs of the presbyteries involved.