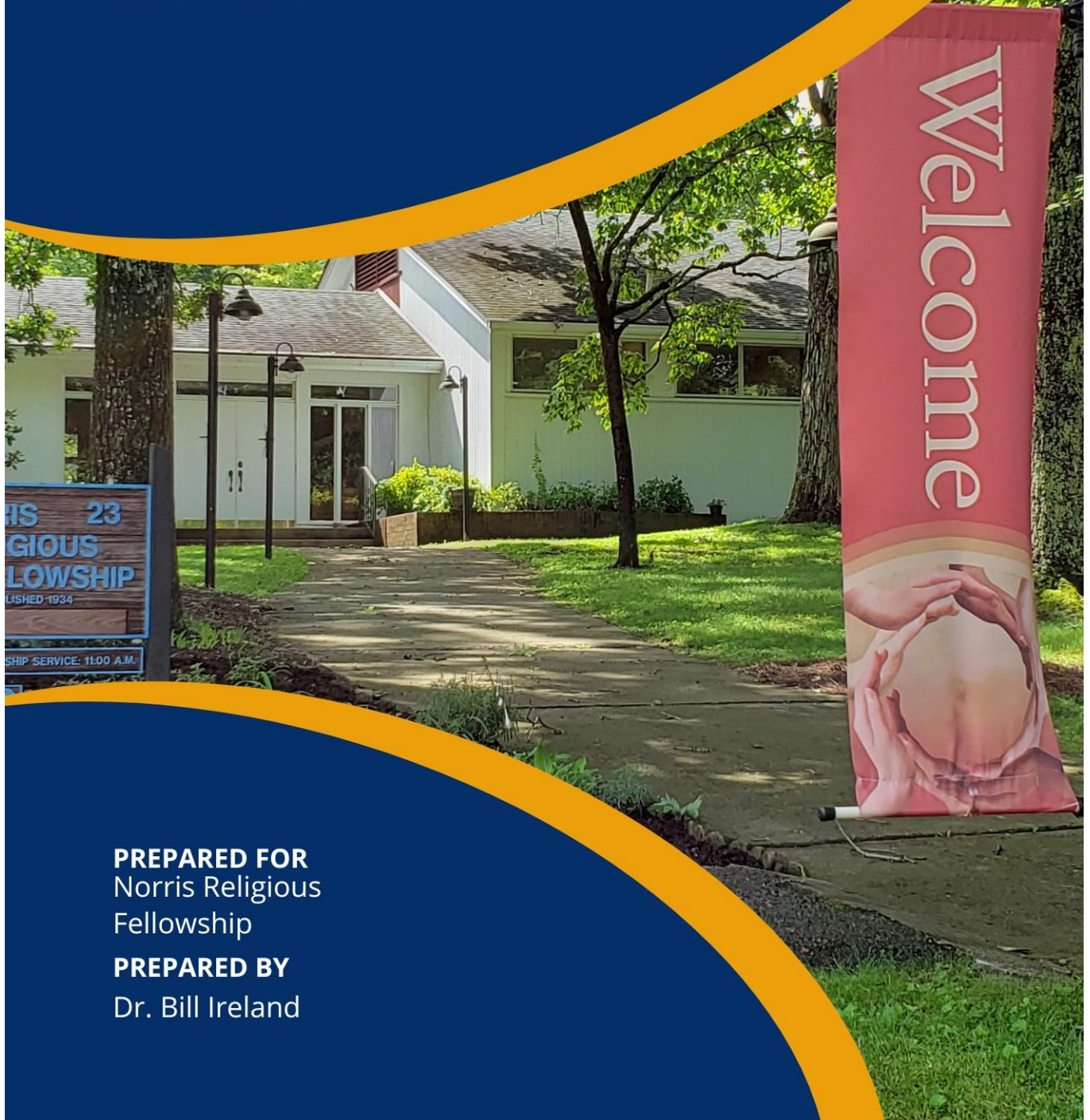


CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS REPORT 2023



PREPARED FOR
Norris Religious
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CHURCH REPORT-NORRIS FELLOWSHIP

This summary is the result of 4-5 congregational conversations held over a year and one-half, beginning in the spring of 2022. We proceeded in fits and starts as our plans were interrupted by COVID and other circumstances. Nevertheless, we managed to make our way forward, and as a result, we have accumulated a lot of data.

In this report, you will find a summary draft of our core values, a copy of selected sections from the Holy Cow survey many of you completed, and a listing of our assets and corresponding opportunities.

I hope you will review this document carefully with an open heart and an open mind. Join me in praying that this report can be one of the means by which the Holy Spirit leads into our “what’s next!”

Grace and peace,

Bill

SUMMARY DRAFT OF CORE VALUES

In this draft, I have developed some summary statements of the primary values we determined were essential to our understanding of our identity.

We have open arms:

- We welcome all and accept everyone for who they are. We are intentionally inclusive.

We have open minds:

- We are ecumenical, honoring all expressions of the Christian faith and are willing to work with other churches to pursue common goals.

We have open hearts:

- We encourage each other's faith development.
- We strive to extend care to those in need.

We have open hands:

- We are a servant church. We seek to *do* the gospel by serving our community and our neighbors.

SUMMARY OF SELECTED SECTIONS OF HOLY COW REPORT

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This survey was completed in 2022. If we took a new survey, I believe it would reflect some significant changes with regard to energy level and optimism. Below are the sections that reflect our priorities, our theological perspectives, and our ability to adapt.

Priorities

Overall Priorities

When members were asked where they wanted additional energy placed, this is how they ranked the eight options on the survey:

Rank	Priority	Mean
First	Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances (e.g. grief, divorce, job loss, addiction, family violence, homelessness, immigration issues, etc.)	5.50
Second	Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners that share this vision and commitment.	5.00
Third	Help members discern their gifts and equip them for ministries that are a good fit for them.	4.88
Fourth	Explore how the church facility might be adapted to become a greater community asset that would increase utilization.	4.54
Fifth	Deepen our sense of connection to God and one another through stronger worship experiences.	4.31
Sixth	Adapt the opportunities provided by the church making them more accessible given the pace and schedule of my life (e.g. small groups, meetings in restaurants, lunch discussions, online meetings, podcasts).	4.15
Seventh	Equip and support our members in effectively managing resources (time, talent, and treasure) and in developing spiritual generosity to the church.	3.96
Eighth	Discern how our ministries might be strengthened by exploring a variety of options for our future (e.g. shared pastoral leadership, merger, change of worship venue).	3.65

Note: Items can be at the bottom of this list for one of two reasons. An item can be at the bottom of the list because it is *less important to respondents*. Alternatively, it can be at the bottom of the list because it is very important to respondents but *is already being performed at such a high level* that additional energy is not required.

Theological Perspective Index

The Theological Perspective Index is a measure of the degree to which members of the congregation hold more conservative or progressive views regarding such issues as the nature of the Scripture, the role of conversion in social change, and their relationship to the historic declarations of the church.

Unlike the other indices such as Hospitality or Morale, the value of the Theological Perspective Index varies from leader to leader. Some pastors may want to see the index increased. Others may feel personal growth requires that it decrease. Each church will have to prayerfully consider how they feel led in developing the theological climate of the congregation.

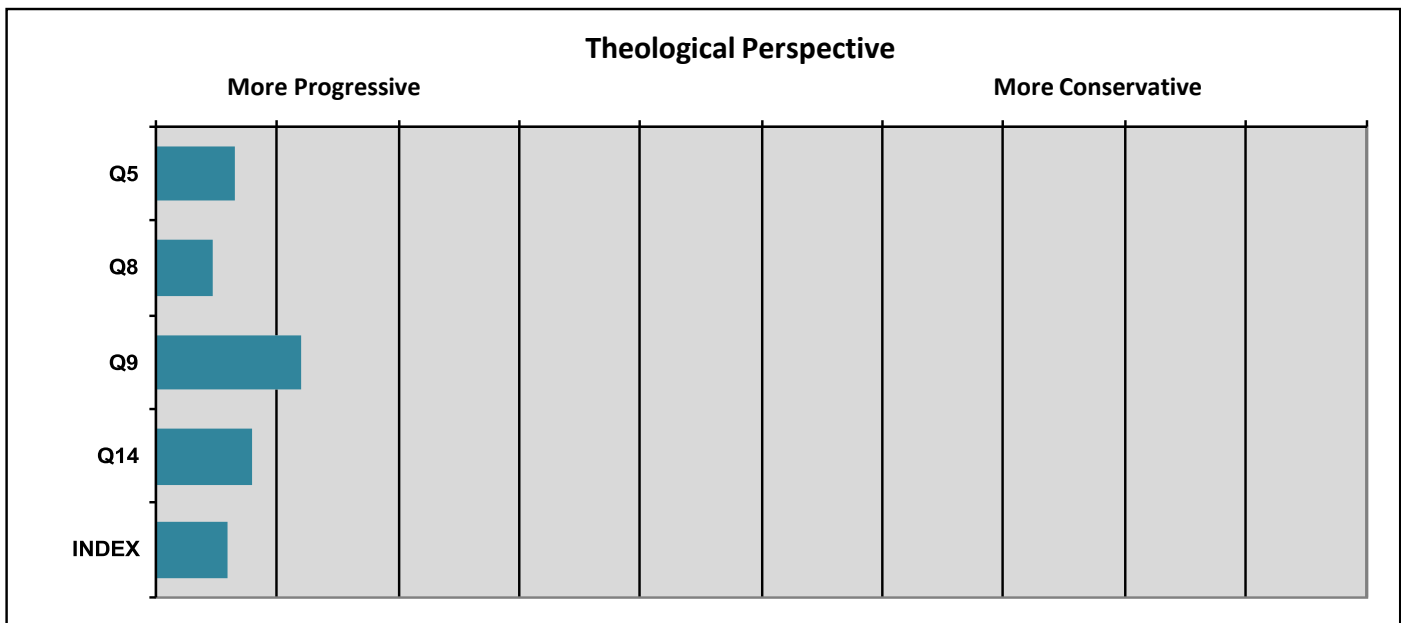
Question Text

Q5	Converting persons to Christ must be the first step in creating a better society.
Q8	Our congregation is committed to abide by the historic faith as handed down through the centuries.
Q9	Scripture is the literal Word of God without error, not only in matters of faith, but also in historical, geographical, and other secular matters.
Q14	The main purpose of Christian education is to help people know what is in the Bible.

Response Percentages (These are the scores from your congregation.)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q5	20.0%	23.3%	20.0%	23.3%	6.7%	6.7%
Q8	3.6%	3.6%	46.4%	21.4%	25.0%	0.0%
Q9	35.5%	16.1%	22.6%	9.7%	9.7%	6.5%
Q14	6.3%	15.6%	31.3%	31.3%	9.4%	6.3%

Comparative Profile (These show how your scores compared with other churches.)



Flexible Style Index

The Flexible Style Index registers the degree to which the church is willing to make adjustments in the way it goes about its ministry. The more flexible a church, the more likely it is to adapt to the particular context in which it is serving to meet either the needs of its members or those of the community. The less flexible a church, the more likely it is to believe that a particular style is central to its identity.

The degree of flexibility in a church should be consistent with its strategic priorities. For example, if a church indicates that one of its priorities is to make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth, it should have the degree of flexibility necessary to achieve that goal.

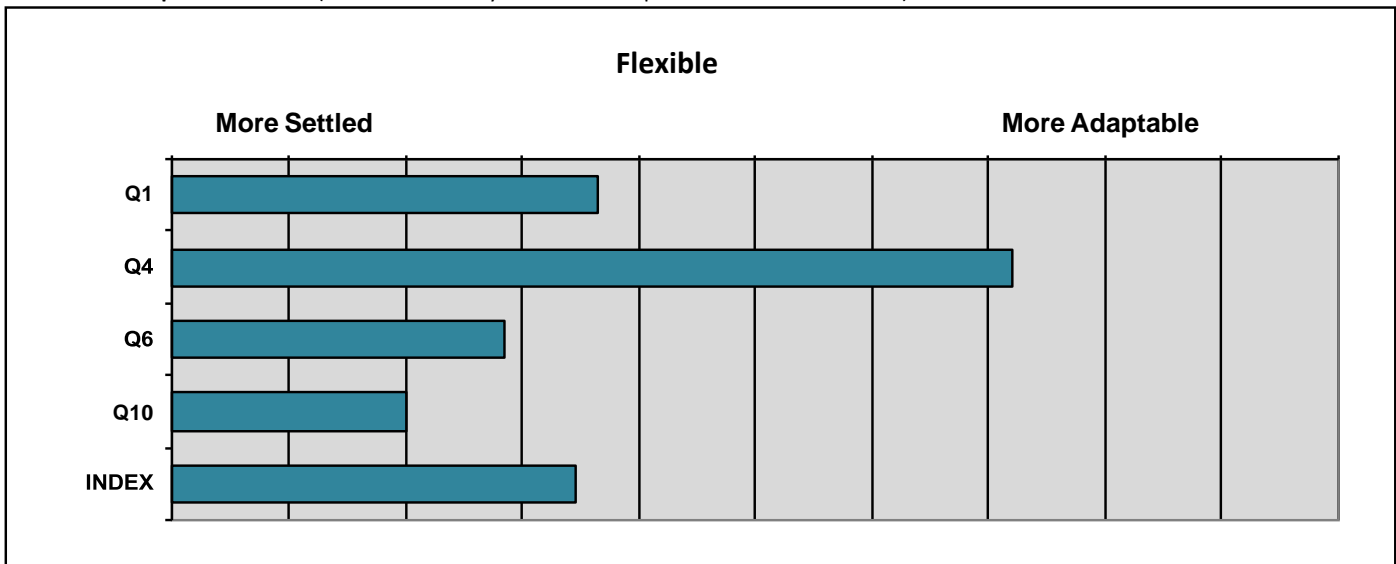
Question Text

Q1	Our members welcome changes in worship.
Q4	Our church tends to stay very close to established ways of doing things.
Q6	We are willing to adapt our worship to the needs and circumstances of the people we want to reach in our local community.
Q10	Our church changes its program from time to time to meet the changing needs of its members.

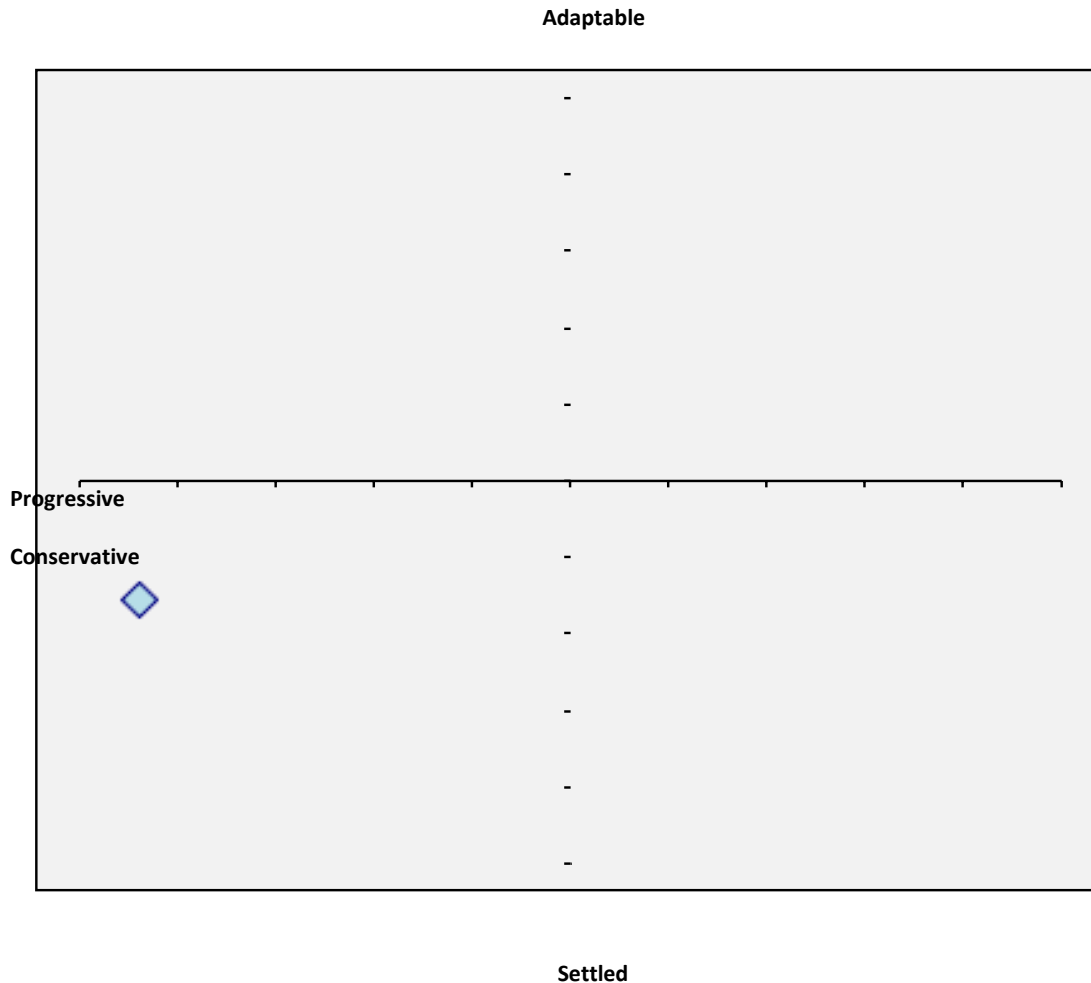
Response Percentages (These are the scores from your congregation.)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Q1	0.0%	7.4%	51.9%	18.5%	14.8%	7.4%
Q4	3.3%	10.0%	6.7%	40.0%	33.3%	6.7%
Q6	6.9%	6.9%	24.1%	34.5%	20.7%	6.9%
Q10	0.0%	15.4%	30.8%	30.8%	23.1%	0.0%

Comparative Profile (These show how your scores compared with other churches.)



Note: A question with an asterisk is negatively worded relative to the index. In the Comparative Profile, the polarity has been reversed. In every case a longer bar suggests a more adaptable evaluation.



This map indicates the particular style of a church using two characteristics. The first characteristic is whether the church is theologically conservative or progressive. The second characteristic is whether the church is more adaptable or settled in its approach to its life. The combination of these two characteristics produces the four different possibilities for the overall style of a church. These are noted in the four quadrants of the map.

1. **Progressive-Adaptable** churches
2. **Progressive-Settled** churches
3. **Conservative-Adaptable** churches
4. **Conservative-Settled** churches

Each of these quadrants represent core values that need to be clarified relative to theology and style. It can also be helpful to explore whether strengths have been fully developed and to identify opportunities for further development. Leaders can also work to understand how the vulnerabilities inherent in their type can be hampering vitality and growth.

ASSET MAPPING AND OPPORTUNITIES/IDEAS

In this section, I collated all of the congregational assets identified through mapping exercise. This section ends with a listing of potential avenues for ministry.

ASSETS

Physical

Building (debt-free)
Very accessible location
Sanctuary (beauty; space for worship and meditation)
Fellowship Hall
Basement space
Memorial Garden
Nursery
Sound system
Organ
Piano
Office building

Associations

Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts
Community Action
ADFAC
ICCC
Ecumenical ministry association

Membership

Diverse and accepting
Variety of ages
Artistic and creative
Variety of skillsets
Strong fellowship: supper club, after church coffee, other meetings

Economic

Debt-free

Dollar Sunday—support of a variety of ministries/causes

Generous members

Faithful givers

Ministries

Soup Supper

Good Neighbors

Involvement with Clothes Closet and Food Pantry

Bazaar

Plant sale

Bible Study

Prayer shawl group

Book study group

Norris Day participation

Winterfest participation

KARM

Plant sale

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

Provide shoes for children.

Pay off school lunch debt.

Offer tutoring.

Volunteer to read to school children.

Host ESL class.

Host concerts (will require modification of rail in sanctuary).

Host cooking classes or meal prep for busy families.

Make safety checks and wellness calls for senior citizens.

Use FH to as after-school gathering space.

Host free medical/dental clinic.

Host community-wide document shredding event.

Provide usable space for pastoral or other types of counseling services.

Host a parents' night out by providing childcare.