

# Summary of Listening Session Questions

## North Central Iowa

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

The hopes and longings center on diversity, efficiency, innovation, deeper community, vibrant gatherings, and setting a positive example for others. These aspirations are grounded in a desire to remain true to scripture and the core values of the church while adapting to new realities.

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

The main fears, griefs, and resistances revolve around loss of identity, logistical challenges, staff capacity, power dynamics, diminished communication, and uncertainty about the future. These concerns highlight the importance of intentional planning, equitable resource distribution, and ongoing dialogue to address the needs of all congregations.

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

A merger could expand capacity for mission, innovation, and support of small churches by blending strengths, fostering creative collaboration, and enabling new models of support and resource sharing. The key is intentional planning to ensure these benefits are realized and equitably distributed.

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

The process of merging three Presbyteries into one presents significant challenges related to staffing, identity, geography, culture, equity, communication, and practical logistics. Addressing these challenges will require intentional planning, transparent communication, and ongoing evaluation to ensure the needs of all congregations are met.

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

Spiritual and missional success is defined by vibrant worship and community, a powerful witness to Christ, support for pastors and churches, innovation, deep relationships, faithfulness to scripture, and a culture of trust and graciousness. These measures go beyond institutional metrics and focus on the lived experience and impact of the presbytery's ministry.

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

The non-negotiables for proceeding with a merger are: equitable and sufficient staffing, respect for all voices and theological diversity, no loss of staff positions, accessible meetings, continued support for mission and college ministry, maintaining the main office at Lakeshore Center, regular re-evaluation, and faithfulness to scripture and church governance.