

Congregation Profile (2020) **--- Severna Park UMC**

Church Name:

AN | Severna Park || Severna Park ||| 1510

1. List and discuss three of the current strengths of your congregation:

1. **Vibrant Worship:** We have an outstanding Music Director with a high level of technical and relational skills who has done a great job of cultivating a positive, welcoming environment in our choirs and worship teams while at the same time drawing out excellent music in all varieties for our worship services. That coupled with a strong team of pastors who plan thematically integrated worship and who preach sermons that connect discipleship with 21st century realities has made for worship experiences that are joyful, engaging and life-giving.
2. **Outward/Missional Focus:** SPUMC has a heart and a passion for serving others beyond the walls of the church. We are active in our community (Heaven's Kitchen, SPAN, Arundel House of Hope, Winter Relief, etc.) and world (VIM teams to Puerto Rico, Costa Rica & Utah; Rise Against Hunger Food-packing events: Sierra Leone School & Church Partnerships; and more).
3. **Strong Children's & Youth Ministries:** A hallmark of the church for the last 45 years, youth and children are an active and very visible part of our congregation. We have a strong Sunday School, an overflowing VBS with 300 kids and tons of energy, special events, and our first ever Family Mission Trip in 2019. We offer a safe, fun and thriving youth ministry to our own youth and youth from the community (about 70 youth each week) that includes annual participation in ASP, retreats, and more.

2. List and discuss three critical needs of your congregation:

1. **Maintaining vital connections as a community in worship, study and service through a global health crisis.** Living as a mostly virtual church for the last 7 months has called for great creativity, flexibility, patience and endurance. We have weathered it fairly well overall, but the longer this drags on the harder this becomes as people suffer from Zoom & screen fatigue and long for in-person community.
2. **Bridgebuilding across the various constituencies within our congregation has always been important -- and is more important than ever -- as a large church seeking to remain a big-tent that can provide a home for people who may be at different places on the theological spectrum or hold competing political worldviews.** This is especially challenging and important given the current polarized political climate where even long-time biblical concepts like social justice are seen as politically divisive. We are still living with the tensions in our denomination over LGBTQ+ inclusion, as well, as we seek to make space for ALL God's children.
3. **Strengthening Our Financial Base to keep pace with our expanding program, missional outreach and facilities needs in the face of a pandemic.** We have exciting new and ongoing ministries that require resources at a time when church funding is more challenging than ever.

3. Check any issues within the congregation that need to be addressed:

- Financial Concerns
- Conflicts within the congregation

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If you selected any, please explain:

Like many UMC congregations, in 2019 "the fallout" from the ongoing global conversation about full inclusion in the UMC had its effects on us as a congregation and this continued to be a live issue for some though less front and center given the Covid-19 crisis and the delay in General Conference. A small group of families and individuals have left as a result ongoing support for the LGBTQ+ community in the form of preaching and our Sacred Worth group.

The clergy and lay leadership have also sought to lift the issue of racial inequity before the congregation in preaching, worship, education, a video statement from our staff, a commitment to become an anti-racist church from our Church Council and more. While this has been widely well-received, there has been some pushback within the leadership to and with some members who link the Black Lives Matter movement with the Democrats liberal agenda. Our pastors and lay leadership continue to be committed to being a church that loves all and makes room for all (including people with different opinions) and stands up for all.

4. What is the vision for the congregation and community over the next 3-5 years?

We feel uniquely positioned to continue to be a church that can provide life-giving ministry for children, youth and adults (both within and beyond our congregation through mission partnerships) AND be an equipping/training congregation for other churches. We are committed to deepening and expanding our Discipleship pathways and being as generous as we can with our resources beyond ourselves. We want to remain faithful to our mission statement -- Love. Serve. Follow. -- while being open to change our methods of doing things. The Covid-19 crisis has forced us to grow our livestream and video ministries exponentially and we are rethinking ways to build on this even once we are back in our building.

5. How will the congregation and pastor work in collaboration towards accomplishing the critical needs and issues?

We are continuing to look to find ways to broaden and deepen the conversations about race and LGBTQ+ inclusion in the UMC that make safe space for people all over the theological and political spectrum. Our goal is to invite and not shut down conversation before it can even begin.

To this end, our Sacred Worth group is working on first person testimonials about how families in our church with gay and lesbian children have been affected by the UMC's position on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Stories have the power to humanize and disarm and take "issues" out of the realm of the abstract. We will also provide forums for information and dialog leading up to the 2021 General Conference and the possible split of the UMC.

When it comes to working towards greater racial justice, this has been an ongoing emphasis for multiple years now and we will seek to broaden the reach of our existing Faith & Race group. We have an active Faith & Race resource page on our website that is intended for a broader audience who want to learn more about racial justice and not just for the "already committed." Our pastoral team and our Racial Justice Task Force will help us to seek out cross-racial partnerships, keep this issue before the congregation in our preaching and worship and find new and different ways to engage people and groups on the issue of race beyond book discussions (movies, field trips, shared mission experiences, etc.)

6. What are the expectations that have not been met through pastoral leadership that you expect to be met in the future? List up to three:

We are very pleased with our current pastoral team and would love to keep it intact for a long time.

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7. If you were to receive a new pastor, list and discuss three expectations you have for them:

We expect that any pastor who serves our congregation will be a person of deep personal faith, a creative and collaborative leader, compassionate towards all and open to change and growth. We highly value worship, outreach and ministry with children, youth and adults and expect that our pastors will work/relate well with all age groups.

We operate with a team that includes two appointed positions: a Lead Pastor who helps to set the tone and trajectory for the staff and leadership team and an Executive Pastor who helps us to execute and organize our ministry with responsibility for some staff supervision and specific areas of ministry. We value proven, dynamic, complementary leadership skills in both positions and this setting requires a high level of competence because of its scale and complexity.

8. If you were to receive a new pastor, provide the following information:

Preferred Salary:

117,834

Parsonage or Housing Allowance:

Housing Allowance

If Housing Allowance selected, enter a dollar figure:

20,364

FICA Payments:

No

FICA Payment amounts:

Car Provided:

No

Car amount:

Club membership:

No

Club membership amount:

Pension (required for full-time clergy):

Yes

Pension amount:

16,719

Health insurance paid by church (required for full-time clergy):

Yes

Health Insurance amount:

10,680

Professional Expense/Reimbursement Account:

Yes

Professional Expense/Reimbursement Account amount:

7,000

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Other benefits:

9. List any additional information that might be helpful to the Cabinet while make appointments:

We are not operating with a typical "Senior/Associate" model for ministry. We have a Lead Pastor and Executive Pastor with the latter position requiring a more advanced/sophisticated skillset than an entry-level provisional commissioned Elder may possess unless they are exceptionally gifted in the areas of administration and staff supervision. When Rev. Carissa Surber was appointed here, we had scaled back the expectations and salary package from her predecessor (who had matured into the role over an 8 year period), given her level of experience at the time and then we aggressively "grew" the position (salary, responsibilities, etc.) as she gained more expertise and deepened her skillset. It would be our expectation that a new "associate" appointment might require an adjustment in the existing salary package and job responsibilities depending on the individual, their background and level of leadership maturity.

Discipleship

10. Approximately how many 12-18 year olds are involved in the life of your congregation?

100-150 youth

11. Approximately how many 19-30 year olds are involved in the life of your congregation?

100-150 young adults

12. John Wesley's Rule of Discipleship provides a holistic understanding of discipleship: "(T)o witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow His teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." Rate each dimension:

a. Members WITNESS to Jesus Christ

Many

b. Members follow Jesus' teachings through acts of COMPASSION

Many

c. The congregation follows Jesus' teachings through acts of JUSTICE

Sometimes

d. The congregation follows Jesus' teachings through acts of WORSHIP

More Often Than Not

e. Members follow Jesus' teachings through action of DEVOTION

Many

13. What is the current state of the congregation's intentional discipleship process?

The congregation is working on implementing an intentional discipleship process.

14. Which best describes your congregation's level of vitality:

We are growing in our discipleship and engagement of persons

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15. According to scholar Ibram X. Kendi, there are no non-racists. There are only anti-racists – those who challenge racist ideas (policies) through their actions wherever they encounter them (including within themselves) — and racists — those who support racist ideas (policies) through their actions or inaction. Being anti-racist is believing that racism is everyone’s problem and understanding that we all have a role in stopping it. No one is born racist or anti-racist; these result from the choices we make.

With this knowledge and understanding, we invite you to tell us where your congregation is (check all that apply):

- The congregation is not of one mind.
- Leadership is having needed conversations in hopes of being able to meaningfully sign the commitment form.
- There are monthly opportunities for dialogue and learning.
- Our congregation has been on a journey of racial justice for a long time. We are still doing the work.

16. If your congregation ceased to exist, what would the community miss?

Our youth program which includes many outside of our church membership, our Vacation Bible School which services 300+ children in non-Covid-19 times, our vibrant and diverse forms of worship that we offer with excellence and joy, our regular acts of compassion that provide food for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, rent/utility assistance to the struggling, a diverse array of spiritual formation opportunities that seek to help people take their next faithful step whether they are new to faith or have been growing in faith for decades.

PREPARED BY: Please have all members of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the clergyperson sign this evaluation. The clergyperson’s signature confirms consultation with the SPRC Committee.

Printed Name:

Craig Linehan

Position:

SPRC Chair

Date:

9/30/2020

Printed Name:

Dave Born

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

Printed Name

Katie Carlin

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

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Printed Name:

Tracy Emmersen

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

Printed Name

Beth Howard

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

Printed Name:

Deb McTammany

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

Printed Name:

Jenelle Piepmeier

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

Printed Name

Ed Prettyman

Position:

Committee Member

Date:

9/30/2020

Pastor's/Deacon's Name:

Rev. Ron Foster

Date:

9/30/2020

Form Status:

Complete