Home Moravian Church

2026 Congregational Summary in Preparation for Calling a Pastor

Approved by the Joint Board October 26, 2026

Mission Statement*: Fulfilling Christ's call to love God, live in community, and serve our neighbors*
Vision Statement: *A church engaged, a community healed, a world transformed*

Introduction

Home Moravian Church is a deeply engaged and active community of faith, grounded in Moravian traditions of music and worship yet focused outwardly serving others and building relationships through mission. The congregation values relationships making the departure this year of 3 beloved worship leaders, including Pastor Ginny Tobiassen, especially sad. As relationships develop with our new music director and organist, Home Church is prepared to call a new pastor to work collaboratively with Associate Pastor Craig Atwood and the Home Church staff.

Recent Home Church Survey Summary

The congregation has participated in significant reflection in recent years, including the 2022 Quadrennial Review and a 2023 congregational survey and engagement process when calling Associate Pastor Craig Atwood. The 2023 survey included 132 responses, providing a substantial body of congregational input. At the same time, 80% of respondents had been members for more than 20 years, only 12% were younger than 51, and 9% had been members for fewer than five years.

Recently, in preparation to call a new pastor, Listening Conversations were held to discern what still feels true and what may have changed. On October 11, 2026, 100 communicant members participated in these conversations. Approximately 8 younger families, who were unable to attend the Listening Conversations, shared their thoughts with Br. John Vogler, a member of the Board of Elders. An additional 17 communicant members submitted written remarks. A summary of these assessments are summarized below.

A Strong Foundation

Home Church values community and belonging.
Home has described itself as a welcoming congregation while also recognizing that, in a large and active church, it can sometimes be difficult for people to find their place and

become involved. **In 2023, building community within the congregation was the highest-ranked area of focus for the next 1–2 years.**

Update: Since 2023 the Home Church community is stronger because of:

- The Sanctuary Flower Visitation Ministry reaching those who cannot leave home
- The Soup Group Ministry preparing frozen soups for delivery to those who are ill or "just need soup"
- Wachovia Garden Volunteers supplying the Home Church Chefs and Sunnyside Ministries with fresh produce and connecting with residents of nearby Belo Home
- The Inquirer's Class attracting over 36 new members this year.

Sense of community and belonging remains central to Home Church. The congregation wishes to become an even more welcoming and diverse community by:

- being friendly, kind and accepting to visitors and new members, especially children and youth, regardless of their differences -- in learning style, neurodivergence, traditional/non-traditional family, gender identity, or economic background
- ministering to one another throughout various stages in life – youth, middle age, senior
- reaching out to our neighbors at WSSU, Salem College, UNCSA, Old Salem, West Salem, Happy Hill
- offering worship services and sermons with an ecumenical message
- improving accessibility and transportation to church facilities for those with disabilities or infirmities
- making greater use of the church's facilities and its unique setting in Old Salem to find creative ways to engage the congregation (especially children) with the history, buildings, and surrounding spaces that make Home Church such a special place
- expanding our concept of church community to include the Southern Province and the Moravian Worldwide Unity – exploring the diversity within the Unity while reaffirming Moravian core beliefs
- Embracing our Moravian identity, history and traditions

Worship, preaching, and music are central to congregational life.
The 2022 review described worship, preaching, and music as uplifting and powerful experiences. The 2023 engagement continued to demonstrate the importance of worship and music to the congregation.

> **Update:** Home Church values worship services that integrate the traditional liturgy, Moravian music, and sermons based on scripture that engage the mind and heart. In worship, the congregation also appreciates an infusion of the intellectual aspects of theology, the absence of partisan politics, and an emphasis on prayer. Important also is connecting Moravian history and traditions with today's world.

Spiritual growth and discipleship are important.
Home Church offers many opportunities for faith formation, including Sunday school, Bible studies, book studies, and prayer. **Spiritual growth/discipleship was the second-highest area of focus identified in 2023.**

> **Update:** Christian formation/spiritual growth remain a central focus:
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> - robust Sunday School offerings for adults, children and youth
> - Women's Fellowship's book club and Praying in Color
> - Living Faith, a small group Bible study

Mission and outreach are important parts of Home's identity.
The 2022 review noted significant energy around mission projects and engagement. In 2023, **mission and outreach was the third-highest area of focus** for the congregation.

> **Update:** Continuing to grow mission and outreach remains a high priority with one congregant's wish being to "build a fire for outreach." With so many opportunities at Home Church to serve our community, there is a desire to add more focus to our efforts and more clarity about church/community activities communicating what we do and how everyone can participate.
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> Additional thoughts on outreach and mission:
> - Grow spiritually, grow in service (along with people)
> - Make a greater difference beyond our walls such as community health
> - Keep personal and public partisan politics out of church activities
> - Increase participation in Forsyth Strong, Diggs-Latham, and The Dwelling (feed them quarterly), Sunnyside Ministry, and World Missions
> - Move toward "a church engaged (internally and externally), a community healed and a world transformed."

Growing Edges

Previous conversations in 2022 and 2023 also identified several areas for continued attention. Today, the following priorities remain:

Children, youth, and engagement across generations: Since 2023**,** Home Church has attracted a number of younger families. One particularly encouraging observation is that the growth in younger membership has felt natural rather than forced with younger families feeling comfortable and welcome to "come as you are."

Home Church wishes to continue attracting and retaining young families and young adults by:

- Strengthening and growing opportunities for children, youth and young adults—leading worship, being in music program, ushering, participating in as many activities at church as available to help them feel connected to the congregation and understand that they have a meaningful place in the life and direction of Home Church and that Home Church has a meaningful place in their lives.
- Offering a church community where children and youth feel accepted regardless of their differences -- in learning style, neurodivergence, non-traditional family, gender identity – they all need and crave community.
- exploring more opportunities for younger families from different Moravian congregations to gather through shared events, activities, and fellowship
- reaching out formally to WSSU, Salem College, UNCSA, and our neighbors in Old Salem, West Salem, Happy Hill
- increasing intergenerational programs and projects
- developing programming for children 4 – 6 grades when they are too old for Godly Play but not old enough for youth programs.

Moravian Identity/Traditions: The Home Church congregation has been, and hopes to continue to be, stewards of Moravian identity in the larger community – through interpretation of the church in a historic district, its Christmas Eve Lovefeast and Candle Services, Candle Tea, and its support of the Salem Congregation Easter Sunrise Services. It is important that Home Church remains authentically itself, with traditional music, strong worship, and a sense of continuity and stability. Learning more about the rich history of the Moravian Church only deepens our faith and underscores the profound statement of the Church: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things love.”

The Call

Home Church is not looking for dramatic changes to the identity or traditions of the congregation. Many of the very things that make Home Church unique—its history, traditional worship, welcoming atmosphere, and strong ministries of mission—are precisely what attract and retain its members. Our hope for the future is centered on preserving those strengths while finding thoughtful ways to deepen engagement within the congregation and externally with the community, the Southern Province, the Worldwide Unity. A pastor who can build on this foundation may feel called to Home Church.

The desired qualities in a new pastor and the congregational efforts offered to support a new pastor are as follows:

Qualities of a New Pastor

Relationships/Pastoral Care:

- compassionate, empathetic, warm, congenial, approachable with a sense of humor
- genuine interest in building relationships across generations and backgrounds
- confidential and discreet
- good listener
- comfortable and experienced in dealing with conflict

Church Administration: For staff and the congregation

- collaborative leadership skills -- with staff and congregation
- strong administrative, managerial, communication, and financial skills
- effective conflict resolution skills
- accessible and responsive (email, phone calls, or in-person conversations)
- strategic thinker -- ability to lead collaboratively toward an evolving vision
- compatible with staff

Worship Service and Sermons:

- exceptional preaching skills (clarity, articulation, expert biblical interpretation)
- clear sense of call and of our faith
- inspirational sermons that help us understand Christ
- strong emphasis on importance of prayer
- solid appreciation and respect for the traditions of Home Church while bringing the energy, accessibility, and relational skills necessary to connect with the next generation of our congregation

Miscellaneous characteristics:

- energetic and enthusiastic
- experienced and knowledgeable
- positive and hopeful
- willing to explore new initiatives
- person of integrity and humility
- community focused

Contributing to New Pastor's Success

- pray for the new Pastor
- ask "How can we help?"
- provide encouragement and "grace" with an open mind and willingness to support
- say "yes" when asked to do things such as serving on a committee or as a volunteer in a particular area of church life
- develop ways, as a congregation, to welcome the pastor and their family into the Home Church community
- invite the pastor and pastor's family for a meal or activity with your family and church friends
- help the pastor learn "the machine" - the entity that is HMC - people, staff, committees - how things work together
- provide open and direct feedback accentuating the positive