

What We're Hearing About Unification: Three-Word Reflections from Annual Conference Members

East Ohio Annual Conference 3-Words

Menti Response Analysis

Executive Summary

On June 12, 2026, members of the East Ohio Conference were invited to submit three words describing their perspectives on the possible unification of the East and West Ohio Conferences. Responses were reviewed and analyzed for word frequency; positive, negative and cautionary themes; key takeaways; overall sentiment; and communications implications.

The East Ohio Annual Conference 3-word responses reflect a community that is open to the promise of unification, but not without significant caution. The strongest positive themes center on hope, unity, mission, shared resources, stronger capacity and new opportunities for ministry. Participants repeatedly used language that points toward possibility: working together, expanding mission, reaching more people and becoming stronger through shared purpose.

The cautionary themes are equally important. Respondents named concerns about pace, process, geography, local voice and trust. Words such as rushed, forced, top-down, predetermined, not listened to, too big and loss of voice suggest that resistance is less about rejecting mission-centered collaboration and more about whether the process feels transparent, participatory and practical.

The communications opportunity is to hold both realities together. Messaging should affirm the hopeful themes of unity and mission while directly and respectfully addressing practical concerns about implementation, travel, staffing, appointments, local support and decision-making. The responses suggest a need for clear information, repeated listening opportunities and visible evidence that feedback is shaping the process.

Bottom line

Respondents see real promise in unity, shared mission and greater capacity, but leaders will need to build trust by addressing concerns about process, pace, geography and local connection.

Key Takeaways

- Hope and unity are the dominant positive themes, especially when connected to mission and ministry impact.
- Concerns about process, pace and whether voices are being heard appear repeatedly and should be addressed directly.
- Geography and scale are practical concerns that may affect how people understand the feasibility of unification.
- The strongest communication frame is not efficiency alone, but shared mission, shared strength and faithful connection.
- Trust-building will require transparency, concrete implementation details and ongoing listening.

Frequently Appearing Positive Words and Ideas

Theme	Frequently appearing words/phrases	What they suggest
Hope / future	hope; hopeful; hope for future; bright future; future opportunity change; stronger concise hope; hope and unity	Participants see possibility ahead, especially if the process leads to a stronger shared future.
Unity / togetherness	unity; united; unified; union; one; together; togetherness; strong together; more together; working together	A major positive thread is the desire for connection, shared mission and becoming “one” in a meaningful way.
Mission / ministry impact	one mission; more missions; reaching greater mission; reaching more people; effective broad ministry; serve God; strength in service	Many responses frame unification through mission effectiveness and expanded ministry reach.
Strength / capacity	strength; stronger; powerful; power strength; greater capacity; shared strengths; biblical strength	Respondents see potential for greater capacity, stronger leadership and shared resources.
Resources / efficiency	resources; more resources; shared resources; combined resources; reduced overhead; budget savings; efficiency; streamlined	Practical benefits are noted, especially better stewardship, reduced duplication and administrative efficiency.
Possibility / opportunity	possibilities; great possibilities; incredible possibility; limitless opportunity; new possibilities; new connections; new collaboration opportunities	The language points to imagination, collaboration and new ministry openings.
Positive emotion / encouragement	excited; excellent; wonderful; joy; encouraged; exciting possibilities; extremely positive	Some respondents express clear enthusiasm and readiness.

Frequently Appearing Negative or Cautionary Words

Theme	Frequently appearing words/phrases	What they suggest
Fear / anxiety / uncertainty	uncertainty; anxiety; anxious; apprehension; apprehensive; nervous; scared; trepidation; uneasy; fear of travel	Emotional resistance is present, especially around unknowns, logistics and outcomes.
Pace / process concerns	rushed; rushed forced; hurried; happening too quick; slow down; needs more discernment; unaccountable rushed	A strong caution is that the process may feel too fast or insufficiently participatory.
Top-down / predetermined	forced; forced predetermined; leadership driven; top down leadership; forgone conclusion; not listened to; not listening	Some responses suggest concern that decisions are already made or that voices are not being heard.

Scale / geography	too big; too vast; too large geographically; long meeting drives; travel cost; farther away appointments	Geography and manageability are significant practical concerns.
Loss / diminished connection	loss of voice; less connection; less local support; job loss; competition for positions; none left behind	Respondents worry about losing local identity, influence, support and staff/security.
Confusion / complexity	chaos; chaotic; confusion; confusing hopeful; complicated; bureaucratic; vast together complicated	Some respondents anticipate administrative complexity and unclear systems.
Skepticism / opposition	bad idea; unnecessary; not now; not sure; takeover; merger stop saying its no	A smaller but clear set of responses indicates resistance or mistrust.

Summary of Findings

The responses are not simply positive or negative. They are best understood as hopeful but cautious. Many participants can name the potential benefits of unification: stronger mission, shared resources, greater efficiency, expanded reach, new collaboration and a more unified church.

At the same time, the cautionary words are important. Respondents repeatedly express concerns about pace, process, geography, voice and trust. Words and phrases such as rushed, forced, top-down, predetermined, not listened to, uncertainty, anxiety, too big, travel cost and loss of voice suggest that the strongest resistance may not be only about the principle of unification, but about how the process is being handled and whether people feel included.

A key communications takeaway: The positive case should not only emphasize efficiency or structure. It should consistently connect unification to mission, ministry impact, shared strength and connectional purpose. At the same time, leaders should directly address concerns about listening, transparency, pace, local support and geographic realities.

Overall Sentiment Snapshot

Sentiment	Description
Positive	Hopeful about mission, unity, shared resources, efficiency and new opportunities.
Mixed / cautious	Interested or open, but concerned about pace, clarity, process and practical implementation.
Negative	Worried about top-down leadership, loss of voice, geography, job loss, diminished local support and feeling unheard.

Suggested one-sentence summary

East Ohio Annual Conference 3-word responses reveal a community that sees real promise in unity, shared mission and greater capacity, while also voicing significant concerns about trust, pace, process, geography and local connection.

Communications Implications

- Lead with mission and ministry impact, not only administrative efficiency.
- Acknowledge concerns directly; do not dismiss words such as rushed, forced or not listened to.
- Use language that emphasizes shared voice, transparency, connection and local support.
- Provide clear explanations about geography, travel, staffing, appointments and practical implementation.
- Create repeated listening opportunities so participants can see how feedback shapes the process.

Source note: Prepared from user-provided Menti word-list screenshots and PDF. These are available for review through the Communications Office.