

First United Methodist Church

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So, last week in my reflection I spoke of the “Strengths” that were listed in our MCCI Report, presented to us in September during our MCCI Consultation Weekend. Last week I mentioned that “Courage” was the surprise word in the list for me. As I mentioned last week, it’s not that I don’t feel it’s accurate, it’s just that I hadn’t considered that specific word or quality for our church. Yet the more I thought about it, the more I liked, and agreed with, that word.

Today I want to touch briefly on the “Concerns” that are listed in the MCCI Report. Actually, it takes a lot of **courage** to face, recognize, and admit to the “concerns” that are a reality in a person’s, or organization’s, life. I’ll admit, the first time I read the “concerns” part of the report, there was a part of me that cringed. I didn’t like any of them, I wanted to object, yet I have to admit there is much truth in every concern that is raised.

Part of the issue for many of the concerns is that we assume other people (guests & visitors) see things through our eyes, or we assume people know what we know. Many of us who have been around our church for a while know where S1 is or even what we’re talking about when we say S1. But the truth is people who are new to our church or aren’t as familiar with the terminology we use, have no idea what S1 is...let alone where it is. And we shouldn’t just take the attitude... “They’ll figure it out.”

What really strikes me about the concerns is that every one of them represents a great opportunity for our church. From Leadership Development, to Family Ministries, to helping people move along a pathway of maturity in their faith (and what that looks like), to reaching out to new people with the love of Jesus (a love that is so important to each of us) – these are all opportunities for us to grow and to do what we do better and more effectively.

The helpful and exciting piece about the MCCI Process is that it gives us an outside perspective on who we are (the good and the not so good) and it gives us a direction to become better. Yes, we are a good church, but we can become better. I’m reminded of a book written several years ago by Jim Collins in which he stated that “Good” is the enemy of “Great.” He wrote that too many organizations (and businesses) get comfortable being good (or good enough) that they stop pursuing being a great business or organization, thus their impact, outreach, and effectiveness is less than it could be.

I realize that sometimes my first reaction to concerns or criticism is to say, “No, that’s not me” or “No, that’s not true.” But over the years I’ve learned to look for the truth in the criticism or the “concerns” that I hear. What is the golden nugget of truth that can help me become a better person, husband, dad, pastor, etc. This is what I invite each of us to do with these “concerns.” Not to just write them off but to find the gold, the truth, in them that is intended for our benefit and intended to help us become great as a church, great as a church family, great as a people reflecting the light and love of Christ in our community.

Thank you for joining me on this journey toward greatness! It’s a journey worth taking.

Serving Together,
Pastor Keith