

First United Methodist Church

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Some of you have noticed that it appears I wear two wrist watches. Actually, one is my watch and the other is a Fitbit. If you're not sure what a Fitbit is, it's a device a person wears that tracks walking steps, heart rate, sleep patterns, flights of stairs climbed, etc., etc. All this information is sent to the Fitbit app on my phone or computer, which then helps me track what I'm doing to stay healthy. It is interesting to track progress and trends in my health by looking at the information over a week's or months' time.

Just the other day I visited my health care provider. They were able to access other information and numbers (blood work, preventative health screenings, lifestyle choices, etc.) which gave a different perspective on my health. She was able to look at information from previous years which gave insight into trends and patterns regarding my fitness and health. It's by looking at all this and other information, that my physician gains insight into my overall physical, mental, and emotional condition, and then make recommendations for what I can do to maintain or improve my health for the days and years to come.

In the same way that our health care providers look at different aspects of our lives to gain insight into our health and make informed decisions for the future, so it is with organizations and even churches. This is why as a part of our MCCI process our leadership is in the midst of doing a "self-study." We are compiling information that will give our consulting team insight into who we are as a church body and help with making plans and decisions that can guide us into a stronger future

Information that is being asked for is; a brief history of our congregation that speaks of the strong points in the churches history as well as points of challenge and difficulty. A description of our facility and all property owned or used by the church as a part of our ministry, a list of paid staff and their area of responsibility, how many hours a week they work, etc. A listing of the pastors and program staff for the past 20 years, how long they stayed and reasons for leaving, what does our church's organizational structure look like.

A brief report is being written concerning our church family; membership, number of yearly baptisms and confirmations, yearly attendance average, Sunday School participation averages, deaths, average age of those participating in the life of our congregation, etc. We're asked to gather information regarding those volunteering and serving in our various ministries, total receipts and expenditures for the current and past 20 years, stewardship campaigns utilized, apportionment payment, etc.

A description of the community in which we exist is asked for, including; brief history, population numbers and trends, income levels, education levels, diversity information, age patterns, etc. We're asked to consider what are our core values and beliefs. Are there key theological, social issues, mission partnerships that guide us. We're asked to provide copies of several bulletins, budgets, information sharing pieces, etc.

All this information provides the consultation team with an insight into who this church is and it helps guide them in considering how we can do what we do even more effectively for the future. We're doing all this to help us be more effective disciples and servants of God in this community. Once this report is completed we'll make copies available for our church family to see and read.

Let's all keep praying for God's Spirit to be at work in and through this process. The best days of our church are yet to come!! Please plan to join us September 22 & 23 here at the church for our MCCI Consultation to be a part of this process. A schedule of events is coming soon. If you have questions, feel free to come visit with me.

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith