

MOVING FORWARD,
UNITED IN MISSION

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
CLARINDA, IOWA

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INTRODUCTION

As a consultant invited by the Administrative Council, I met with over 30 leaders of the First United Methodist Church on June 10-11, 2008 for a time of consultation. I held individual interviews with members of the staff, including pastor, custodian, and church secretary. I also met with key lay leaders individually for their insights and observations about the church. In addition to the individual interviews, I also met the following groups of people (or representative): Staff-Parish Relations Committee; Trustees; Adult Sunday School classes; Women's Bible Study; choir; fellowship committee; UMW; Praise team; and the Administrative Council **The consultation was highlighted by the evening sessions with the Administrative Council, leaders, and all others of the congregation who wished to attend where pertinent data was shared and examined and my recommended leverage points were presented and discussed.** These two days were a lively and enlightening time together.

It is therefore out of this framework of contact with many groups and leaders within the First United Methodist Church (in addition to pre-consultation questionnaire, letters, and data) that I offer to you my reflections, my observations, my insights, my recommendations and my perception of the key leverage points for the future growth of your church. It was indeed a privilege and a joy to spend this pivotal period of time with you. **Your energy, openness, honesty, humor, dedication, commitment, and insight made my work easier and renewing. The opportunity to assist you in building on your already obvious strength as a church was exciting.** I trust that most of what I offer to you in this report will be helpful to you and your ministry as a church in the coming months and years. May God continue to bless you in your efforts to fulfill your purpose, to glorify God by making disciples for Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CITY OF CLARINDA

The ministry area in the city of Clarinda has an estimated population in 2000 of 5690 - of which 92.0% are Caucasian, 1.4% are Latino, 4.6% are African-American, 0.7% are Native American, and 1.1% are Asian. There are 2017 households. 27.5% of households are married with children under the age of 18 years of age and 9.8% of the households are single mothers with children under 18 years of age. **49.4% of the households have married couples.** 65.7% of people in Clarinda live in multiple person households and 34.3% live in single person households. **The median income for a family in Clarinda is \$43,654 per family.** 16.3% of the population is under the poverty line. **The median age is only 38 years** - so the community is a younger demographic profile than the church. 59.2% of the population is under the age of 45! The city includes the Clarinda Academy (for troubled youth), a prison, and a mental health facility – all of which are outstanding possibilities for outreach ministries.

The potential ministry area of the church includes a population that exceeds 8,000 people. So the church needs a broad ministry to reach the ministry area of the church. Almost 60% of this population is unchurched and about 60% of that population is under 45 years of age. **That means that over 2,600 unchurched persons under the age of 45 live within the ministry area of First United Methodist Church.** This provides a tremendous challenge for outreach and ministry development that will be more specifically focused later in my report.

Finally, the demographics of Clarinda indicate that about 1/3 of the households prefer traditional music and traditional worship, about 1/3 of the households prefer contemporary music and contemporary worship and about 1/3 prefer both contemporary and traditional worship and music. **It is a population (like most) that is made up of persons who respond in significant numbers to entirely different styles of worship and music.** The impact of this reality on the life of First United Methodist Church will be explored more fully in a later section of my report.

Let me conclude by simply stating what you know: **the Clarinda area has a significant population and a significant number of unchurched persons** (especially children, youth, and younger adults) - and therefore a wonderful opportunity for First United Methodist Church to make new disciples for Jesus Christ. You are strategically placed in the heart of a vital, exciting mission field - congratulations! **Now you need a sense of urgency to aggressively and dynamically engage in your mission!**

REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH

1. Size. First United Methodist Church is at a challenging size - 170 - in average worship attendance. **You are larger than 76% of all Protestant churches in America and 78% of all United Methodist churches in America in your Sunday morning worship attendance. You are a strong mid size church** - and continuing to change to act in a way consistent with your growing size will be important for your future growth in worship attendance. Every person from the church that filled out a questionnaire for me saw First United Methodist Church as a middle size and expect it to function as such - but it is large and needs to function that way in order to facilitate care, volunteerism, outreach, assimilation, and ministry and leadership development. Many churches begin to plateau around 200 in average worship attendance because to grow larger requires changes that the church is unwilling, unable, or not ready to make. **You are already doing several things to move beyond 200: increased focus on ministries with children, youth, and young adults; choice of worship times and styles; an expanded program staff; good music program; a clearer sense of the need for a central, guiding mission and purpose; caring and accepting environment; and the strengthening of a membership care system and process for following up on visitors and potential members.**

There are, however, some additional key issues that are important to move beyond 200 in average worship attendance. First are two foundation issues that need to be the basis of all the rest of the ministry of the church. These are purpose and vision - a clear sense of who you are and what you are about for God (purpose) and a clear focus on who God is calling you to reach (vision). First United Methodist Church must be a purpose-centered (as opposed to preference-centered) church that is intentionally developing ministry for a specific group of people in order to effectively disciple them for Jesus Christ. These will be addressed in much greater detail in the next section of my report.

The other key issues for First United Methodist Church to address as you seek to grow beyond 200 include the following: **being consistent with a comprehensive, consistent assimilation process for newcomers (with small groups as central to that strategy); a comprehensive care system; a further developed system of volunteerism to enhance participation; a plan for staff and lay leadership development that enhances and broadens participation; and expansion of ministry space by building a new facility.** Each of these steps can play an important role in strengthening and expanding the outreach of First United Methodist Church so that you can continue to make disciples for Jesus Christ. It also means a willingness to be a different church, changing as needed to accomplish that purpose of disciple-making.

2. Do Well. Those gathered on the first evening were quick to come up with a comprehensive list of strengths for First United Methodist Church, including the following (number of multiple responses in parentheses):

Friendliness (2)

Music (3)

Being a family (3)

Outreach – free clinic; faith, food and fellowship; sew and share (5)

Community drama – Last Supper

Responds well to perceived needs (2)

Care for each other, including prayer chain (2)

Social justice

Among these, explicit and implicit, are **prayer, fellowship, worship and music, friendliness, caring, missions; helping; and outreach** - not only in this setting but throughout my time at First United Methodist Church. And that is an excellent foundation upon which to build and expand the ministry of outreach and expanding participation at First United Methodist Church. This list of strengths could provide the basis of a church brochure for the community that would center on these attributes - marketing by strength, attraction by what is attractive.

3. Key challenge or opportunity. Those gathered on the first evening made a list of the key issues facing First United Methodist Church in the next 12 - 24 months or so. The following is that list (with number of multiple responses in parentheses):

Bring in younger families with children (4)

Unity as a church

Reaching the community that is more than 50% unchurched

Demonstrating the vitality of a Christ filled life (2)

Accessibility for aging members (2)

Get our own members involved (2)

Bring 2 services together and blend them

Lacking in leadership (not just the pastor up front)

During change, communicate clearly, broadly, regularly – what and why
Again, **the key themes are unity, dealing well with change, welcoming, spiritual growth, accessibility, involvement, leadership development, and evangelism.** Several of these will be an important part of my recommendations.

4. **Worship services.** **There are currently 2 worship services available every Sunday morning.** There is a more **traditional service at 9 AM** that reaches a wide range of ages and averages about 125-130 in worship. **This worship service tends to be more traditional,** with pastoral prayer and Lord's prayer, Doxology, hymns, choir, robes, acolytes, organ, and **sermon to connect the Bible to life today.** The service has energy and moves at a good pace. **The 11:15 AM worship service is more contemporary in style and averages in the 40s in attendance. This service includes contemporary music, including congregational singing and singing by the praise team. There is Biblical preaching/teaching on how the Bible helps us live today.**

These 2 worship services are meaningful, inspirational, vital, spiritually nurturing, and essential to the mission of First United Methodist Church. To nurture the current congregation, as well as to reach out to newer and younger persons, it is important to offer choices of times and styles with a different schedule and locations. I will say more about this later in my recommendations.

5. **Preaching.** **I am affirming of the focus that Pastor Andy intends to bring to preaching.** I affirm his setting aside 8 – 9:30 AM daily for sermon preparation to strengthen even more his preaching. I also affirm his developing the practice of laying out his themes and Biblical texts for his sermons 3 – 6 months in advance (which also helps the music and worship teams to align also with those themes by having adequate time to do so and thereby further strengthening the worship experience for both current attenders and newcomers).

6. **Music.** **Music is very important in the life of First United Methodist Church.** The music staff includes a choir director, a children's choir director, and an organist. The choir sings at 9 AM and includes between 15-20 members. The children's choir of 7-10 children sing monthly. There is a movement to establish again the hand bells that played quarterly. The 11:15 AM service has a praise band, with drums, 2 keyboards, bass guitar, 2 additional guitars, and 4 vocalists that sing with the instrumentalists – with several high school members.

7. **Christian education.** **The Christian education program at First United Methodist Church has been available for all ages. There are groups for children's Sunday School.** Currently there are 3 children's classes: 3 year olds - kindergarten, 1st – 3rd grades, and 4th – 6th grades. In summer, there is a 'one room Sunday School'.

There are also a VBS with 5 family days that is a way of attracting and reaching new children and their families. This VBS (and 6 every other month children's outreach events on Saturday mornings that are interactive and participatory like VBS) has a great potential to draw children in who are not already connected to Christ or a church – if we invite them (as will be discussed in the recommendations).

There is a Sunday School Class for Senior high (with 2-4 youth) and for Junior High youth (with 8-10 youth) as well. There was also a confirmation class of 9. This core of youth can be the basis of developing a youth group that will be discussed later in this report.

There are a few solid adult classes in the life of First United Methodist Church. There are the Together class (of 15-20 older adults), Aldersgate class (with about 5-6 participants), and the Pastor's class (with 6-10 persons). There is one adult class in the summer.

You also have several persons who have been through Emmaus.

In order to involved more persons in classes, **I would urge that you also begin some small groups that meet once or twice a month** – so that it will be easier for younger, dual income with children, busy and not churched adults to get started and connected with a small group for connection, involvement, care, and spiritual nurture. If the only opportunities to participate in a small group are weekly, you will find it very difficult to connect a large group of persons into a small group. A process and resource for starting small groups is included later in this report.

8. Finance and Stewardship. **The giving level at First United Methodist Church is decent, but it still has room to grow in stewardship.** The average giving by the top 10 giving units is \$5,800 annually or \$111 per week. The average giving by the second 10 giving units is \$2,700 annually or \$52 per week. The giving by the remaining giving 395 family units at the church is \$92,000. Although this represents strong giving by many in the congregation, there is still room for improvement and it will be critical to the spiritual growth and health of the disciples at First United Methodist Church, and thereby the church as a whole, to grow especially and particularly in stewardship. I use that term intentionally, in addition to fund-raising. **Fund-raising is the process of communicating why folks ought to give to your cause or organization because of its benefits.** There was no fund drive in 2007 so no one pledged for 2008. **You literally cannot afford for this to happen in 2008 – and I have a recommendation for a stewardship drive later in this section of this report.**

I recommend that future fund-raising include a brochure describing the church's comprehensive ministries (which is a primary reason why constituents would want to support the budget) and ongoing communication about the giving in the newsletter to let the readers know how the congregation is doing in its giving. I recommend that future fund-raising continue to be assertive, including a **brochure describing the church's comprehensive ministries** (which is a primary reason why constituents would want to support the budget) and **ongoing communication about the giving in the newsletter** to let the readers know how the congregation is doing in its giving. I also support having a **fifth statement at the end of November** so people can catch up their pledges before the end of the year and thereby create more financial giving “winners” - and that financial statement show the amount pledged and how the contributor is doing on fulfilling their pledge. This will become increasingly important as you continue to grow.

Stewardship is giving a portion back to God of what you have received form God by grace out of gratitude, typically a tithe or 10%. Spiritual growth results form stewardship. First United Methodist Church will need to continue to do fund-raising: communicating what benefits (ministries) occur form giving to the church. It will be helpful to increase dramatically the number of persons who participate in the finance campaign because those that participate, give. But there will need to be an increasing emphasis on stewardship: giving out of gratitude for grace. It is the way God desires us to give to the church. The focus of fund raising is the budget; the focus of stewardship is my income. **Stewardship can begin by figuring what percentage of income is currently being given and setting a personal goal to increase that percentage by 1/2 to 1% or more each year until it reaches or exceeds 10%.** Many persons will begin to practice stewardship if they can begin where they are and continue to move toward a tithe over time (and usually more quickly than they first expect!) **I recommend the use of the Consecration Sunday stewardship campaign by Herb Miller this Fall** - it has had excellent

results in thousands of congregations. **When stewardship is widely practiced among the congregation with the *leaders of the church leading the way in this style of giving***, then the issue of budget, money, and cash flow will no longer be a major issue that limits the dreaming and ministry expansion of the church.

I further recommend an even broader stewardship emphasis that focuses on the United Methodist membership vows to be loyal through *prayers, presence, gifts, and service*. So ... you could focus on **stewardship of presence** this winter by having persons in the congregation make a pledge in worship after the first of the year (in conjunction with a Wesley covenant service) on how often they will be in worship. In the spring could be the **stewardship of prayers** during Lent, with daily devotions and participating in a small group for spiritual growth that could then continue at least monthly all year long. Late spring could be a focus on the **stewardship of service**, with folks filling out a talent survey in church and inviting folks to attend a class to discover their spiritual gifts as well and then commit to be involved in a ministry once or twice a month based on their gifts and talents. The appendix offers some additional aids. The late summer could then be the **stewardship of gifts**, making my pledge toward a tithe. In other words, stewardship could become a regular emphasis across the year of prayers, presence, gifts, and service.

9. Missions. **The church is very active in the area of mission and outreach does so with passion**. There are several mission projects (including Volunteers in Mission) that are supported with money and/ or time and labor. Those projects include Sew and Share (about 12 women who sew with proceeds providing groceries for those in need); Faith, Food, and Fellowship (a community free dinner weekly that includes Bible Study, commodities distribution, and then a meal done by community groups); and Nodaway Valley Free Clinic (started by this church and now community based). **Continuing to expand the opportunities for local missions that can connect the church directly with people will be significant as a way of outreach into the neighborhood and the community. But it will be important that this ministry is not just “to” and “for” these people but also “with” them**. Ministries with people tend to connect them to Christ and the church. A get strategy to do this is by having your service be service evangelism. The details and contact information about this style of service ministry is included in the appendix.

10. U.M.W. **The UMW has 15-20 women involved in their ministries**. The group meets monthly on Monday (with no circles). Their ministries include support of missions, children, bereavement dinners, mother and child banquet, and placing a rose on the altar to honor new babies.

The UMW is developing affinity groups, rather than circles (which I affirm as having been more effective in connecting women in other churches). There is a MOPS group, a Tuesday morning breakfast club that meets monthly, and a group that visits the elderly in the church.

11. Administrative Council. **The Administrative Council currently meets every other monthly for 60 minutes**. Usually the Council has a few votes at a meeting and mostly hears and celebrates the ministries of the various areas of the church.

This way of functioning works well for a church that is somewhat smaller than First United Methodist Church. **By the time a church is at 200 in worship attendance, it is helpful to make sure that more of the decisions are being made in the committees responsible rather than in the Administrative Council**. The principal that applies here is that **healthy organizations consistently match authority with responsibility**. (This is explained more

thoroughly in the appendix under Team Based Ministry). **So I would affirm that the Administrative Council begin meeting every other month for 60-90 minutes and look to only take the votes needed to be taken by the Council** (usually 1 or 2 votes) and not routinely approve what is already decided by the appropriate committee or ministry team (and therefore avoid stealing “ownership” from them).

It will also be important to continue to envision and plan at least 6-9 months into the future. It takes time to the group in charge of the new ministry to from, decide, implement, and publicize the ministry so others can participate and benefit from it. This takes time and so continuing to look far ahead will be essential to help persons participate well in the ministries of First United Methodist Church.

I also encourage reporting of committees to be centered around what they have achieved in their area of responsibility for the sake of the mission God has given First United Methodist Church and not just list the activities that have occurred (as good as those activities are). Focus on results for the sake of God’s mission.

12. Building and Facilities. Let me begin by **several affirmations.** A new roof was put on 4 years ago at a cost of \$120,000. In the sanctuary building, the towers were rebuilt; sidewalks fixed; updated sound system; remodeled the nursery (that has been used for storage and needs to be cleaned out immediately to be able to be used as a nursery!); and replaced the kitchen floor. In the educational wing, there are new windows; a radon gas system was installed; and steps and sidewalk to the parking lot were laid. **Congratulations on the completion of these projects. It is also true that the sanctuary building is settling.** The choir loft is sagging; the doors do not close tight; and the windows are not tight. There is still mold in the bathroom in the nursery. This is to be expected with a facility of its age. And the maintenance issues will only accelerate and become larger the older the building becomes. The church cannot live by the adage “get it done cheap; get it done quick”.

However, there has been a lengthy, 25+ year delay on building a new sanctuary building. There was then a push for a new building and a sizable sum of money was raised (that is now about \$800,000 in the endowment fund). The issue went to a Church Conference, where the written ballots were counted by the pastor and declared a tie, a 3 year moratorium on new building declared by the pastor – and nothing more was done. **And so the church has not done anything with a new building since then. But the time has come – and I will address that in my recommendations.**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FOUNDATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

I want to bring these 2 recommendations because I believe that they have the potential to be the foundation for the rest of the ministry of First United Methodist Church (which is what the remainder of the recommendations address). **The first has to do with becoming a church that is increasingly purpose-centered as opposed to preference-driven. The second is the discernment of a ministry focus of specifically who God is calling you to reach with a well-developed, comprehensive, intentional, consistent ministry strategy.** These 2 recommendations are integrally linked together, with the purpose evolving into the vision. Together, they provide the solid framework on which the rest of the ministry and organization can be build.

1. Purpose-Centered Church. There is a **vital and integral relationship between our mission** (our purpose, our reason for being) **and our identity** (who we are, our core values, our “DNA”). Doing ministry well is not about focusing on just one or the other of these two key components of the church’s core ideology. It is about doing both consistently well – living out our mission in a way that honors who we are. So let’s start with a focus on the nature and significance of the purpose, which is as follows:

*“The mission of First United Methodist Church is Inward, outward, and upward:
Inward – we are calling people to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ!
Outward = we are calling Christians to serve one another with the love of Christ!
Upward – we are offering Christians the opportunity to worship God in Spirit & Truth!”*

Our Mission

The significance of a church being purpose-centered can be expressed in several ways. **To be purpose-centered means that you have a clear statement of purpose.** Such a purpose statement needs to be clear, concise, comprehensive, and comprehensible. **This purpose statement needs to be Biblically centered and also focused on the needs of the people** (inside and outside the church) and the strengths of the congregation.

The purpose statement centers around **core purpose** (like “making disciples for Jesus Christ” or “serving God to transform the lives of people through the grace of Jesus Christ”) and **3 - 5 core values**. This statement can give a sense of direction that can convert the church's sense of random energy into power that accomplishes work so that the church is not involved simply in activity but action - so you are consistently and dynamically in mission “to the least, the last, and the lost”.

Our Identity

As I noted before, the core values that are indeed central to the identity of First United Methodist Church are usually at the center of the list of “what we do well”. **We do these things well and are drawn to do them because they reflect the identity of the church through our core values.** In any case, discerning and claiming the core values is imperative to living out our mission in a way that honors who we are.

Doing Out Mission and Honoring Who We Are

The best way I have to describe what occurs when we not only do our mission but when we do our mission in a way that honors who we are is using a physics analogy. In physics,

there is a difference between energy and power. **You need to do two things to energy in order for it to be power. You need to give direction to the energy and you need to enable it therefore to accomplish work for the energy to become power.** Energy may be happening in a church that is busy but does not have a sense of direction or live out its mission – but that is not power. God intends for the church to have power, not just energy.

It is our identity that gives us energy. We are invigorated when we live out how we are – when we serve, when we are relating, when we minister with children and youth, when we seek to grow spiritually. **Our mission gives us direction and work.** We need to do them together. **It is our identity and mission that gives us power.** When we try to do our mission without connection to our identity, we lack energy to do it and can even become conflicted and resistant. When we live out our identity apart from our mission, we are busy but not much happens or results form our efforts. We need to do our mission in a way that honors who we are (our identity).

To be a purpose-centered church also means that this purpose statement is widely owned and widely known. First United Methodist Church's Purpose Statement must then be owned by the Administrative Council (which is significant) and be regularly quoted so that the entire congregation has a way of being continually reminded of its existence and importance. This sense of ownership and communication are also important to a purpose-centered church. The key piece of being a purpose-centered church that I want to challenge First United Methodist Church to fulfill so that its purpose can become increasingly central to its mission and ministry is that of **using the Purpose Statement as the primary criteria in decision-making throughout the life of the church.** The alternative criteria that otherwise creates difficulty in fulfilling the Purpose Statement is that of being preference-driven. I know that this is not the intent of the church. But if the church does not make the purpose the primary criteria, then preferences will become the primary criteria by default!

Let me describe more concretely how you can better function as a purpose-centered church. You can do this by consistently and continually asking yourselves throughout the church this question as you make a decision: **"Among these options before us, which one will best accomplish our Purpose Statement?"** rather than evaluate the appropriate course of action by asking preference questions like **"which choice do I personally prefer?"** or **"which choice will make the most people happy?"** or **"which will make the least people upset?"**

Being purpose-centered is a whole different way of assessing what we ought to do. So instead of deciding what kind of music we should use for worship by taking a survey of preferences (which implies that the majority preference wins - or the preference of the most vocal - or most powerful or . . . ?), we instead look at our purpose statement and then our vision of who we are trying to reach - and develop music appropriate to our purpose and our vision. **In practical terms, this means that the pastors, staff, and leaders will evaluate their ministries and recommendations for ministry in light of the Ministry Focus.** This means that the Administrative Council and every decision-making group in the church uses the Purpose Statement as **the** criteria for decision-making. The issue consistently becomes: How can we best accomplish our mission? What will make us most effective, within the constraints of what we can do and what is the best fit for us as a church?

Granted, preferences are important as we evaluate how to develop appropriate ministry for the various kinds of people both who are already a part of First United Methodist Church -

and those that we hope to attract through appropriate ministry. But preferences are seen in the context of purpose, not as a substitute for purpose.

The role of a clearly written, widely understood, consistently used Purpose Statement for decision-making, program development and evaluation of effective ministry is invaluable. The church can dramatically increase its ministry effectiveness by being purpose-centered. This also brings the church into unity, not uniformity - allowing diversity to be channeled in a common direction for a common purpose.

2. Ministry Focus. The Ministry Focus flows out of the Purpose Statement. **The Ministry Focus is a statement of who we believe God is calling us to reach next by a well-developed, comprehensive, intentional, consistent ministry strategy.** Given limited financial and personnel resources, we cannot develop every needed ministry for every potential group of unchurched people. So we make a choice of who we will develop ministry for next in order to make them disciples for Jesus Christ. It is important to understand that in the church, everyone is always invited, welcomed, and responded to. This is not an issue of exclusion but of focus for effectiveness. When the ministry to the target group of the vision is established, then the church has the exciting possibility of developing new ministries and strategy for a new target group. Several questions may facilitate this process of focusing your ministry: **Are there folks out there to be reached whom we feel led and called by God to reach? Do we have the resources (money, leadership, persons, facility) available that we could develop the ministry that is compatible with those we are called to reach? Is there another church out there already doing this ministry and attracting those folks in such dramatic and effective ways that there is not need for us to do the same thing? Do we have an inspired passion to reach those folks so that we are willing to change, to develop ministry, to give generously of our resources to accomplish this vision?** These questions are not exhaustive, but suggestive, as a church looks to discern its focus for ministry.

In our time together, the groups gathered confirmed that there is a group of people that would be excellent, initial candidates as a focus for ministry. **This group is younger adults and their children under age 18 that are not already a part of a church.** This would include young adults, younger adults, youth, children, college students, married, singles. This includes folks who have not been part of a church before. It is around this vision that I will explore in my recommendations the implications for programs, ministries, volunteerism, small groups, worship, music, and organization. You are already doing much effective ministry in these areas as you reach out intentionally to this group of people - as well as doing effective ministry for adults who are older. I trust that these recommendations will be most helpful as you continue to respond to God's leading you in effective ministry for Jesus Christ in your ministry area.

So the Mission Statement can under gird the ministry of First United Methodist Church with **"why"**? The Ministry Focus answers the question **"who"**? The remaining recommendations are premised on Mission Statement and Ministry Focus and they provide exciting responses to the questions **"what"**? and **"how"**? So as you see, together your comprehensive ministry strategy can be developed, built solidly on the foundation of your Mission Statement and Ministry Focus

LEVERAGE POINTS RECOMMENDATIONS

The remainder of my report is a list of promised recommendations for your consideration for implementation. Although I believe that each of these recommendations have significant positive impact on the future growth of First United Methodist Church, these are recommendations that have such widespread and immediate impact that I have singled them first as leverage points recommendations.

Let me explain what I mean by a leverage point. If you think in terms of moving a large object by use of a lever, you are aware that by placing the lever at the most appropriate place (where the fulcrum can be maximum benefit) the heavy obstacle can be moved with the least effort and the greatest effect. The same principle applies with any system, including a church. **By putting your effort at the leverage points for growth, I believe that you will see maximum results for growth** (spiritual, communal, and numerical) **form the invested time, effort, planning, leadership and prayer.**

My perception is that the 3 identifiable leverage points that present the greatest opportunity for growth are as follows: **reach younger adults and their families; expand participation; and establish a Building Committee to recommend a plan for future facilities.** By focusing consistent and major attention and energy on these 3 leverage points, I believe that you will move beyond an average worship attendance of 200 and continue to grow significantly in new disciples for Jesus Christ. Let's now look together at each leverage point and the ministry opportunities that each one presents for an exciting future for First United Methodist Church.

1. Reaching and Connecting Younger Adults and their Families. In order to reach younger adult families for Jesus Christ as you sense a calling from God to do, it will also be important to reach and connect the young adults and not just the children. Currently, there are less than 10 families with children under the age of six – but this is a good core to build upon. The pieces for this strategy will include adding contemporary worship; developing a young adult fellowship that also includes a Sunday School class; connecting young adults in ministry through ministry teams; having staff focused on children, youth, and younger adults; strengthening youth ministry; and expanding children's ministry.

Strengthening Contemporary Worship

Let me be clear why this worship service is needed and why I do not at all recommend having only one worship service. The contemporary service has great potential to reach new persons for Jesus Christ, especially younger adults and their families. In other words, this service needs to continue and to be strengthened to continue to focus on God's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This service would continue to begin with contemporary music, including congregational singing and singing by the praise band (with guitars, keyboard, bass, horns, and drums - similar to what I understand you do now in the late service and hopefully with some of those musicians). There would be a significant time of sharing and prayer. **Then comes proclamation, including arts** (such as teams for drama, video) **and Biblical preaching/teaching on how the Bible helps us live today that is understandable to children, teen, and young adults.**

The environment and dress needs to be very casual to reach the unchurched

younger adults and their children you are looking for – so I strongly recommend that the contemporary service be moved to the fellowship hall (recognizing the need for good sound and ability to see the praise team and preacher). It will also be easier to develop the energy needed for a dynamic contemporary service in a smaller space that is more flexible and interactive.

Such a style of contemporary service works best when a theme is developed in advance and ministry teams work on each piece of the service around that theme. This service would be contemporary in style, dress (no robes), and feel. By including persons from the target market up front as participants, assistants, and leaders for the worship service, you tend to draw greater numbers of those persons as worshipers to that service.

The music continues to be contemporary music – but consistent with the particular target market you are seeking to reach (younger adults, children, and youth). In essence, it would be a blended contemporary style of music, appealing to all of those in the ministry focus.

Develop the teams you will need to do the service well. These teams need to meet every week or two in order to organize and implement well their ministry. Get the equipment you need, including a video projector and good sound system with sound board and wireless microphones. Don't rush into this before you are focused, clear, and ready to do it well. It will take several months before you are ready to go monthly and a few more months before you will be ready to do this worship service weekly. So take your time to do it well and put all the pieces in place before you begin to go public with the worship. This is too important not to do it well from the start, especially the music.

I also urge you to start this contemporary service earlier on Sunday morning so it will end by noon. This is very important to reach younger families – especially those with children under age 6 who need to get home by noon for lunch and naps. Currently there are only a couple of families with children under age 6 that attend this service regularly and I believe the lateness of its ending time is a prime factor. **So the new schedule would look like this:**

8:45 – 9:45 AM Traditional Worship

9:55 – 10:45 AM Sunday School

10:50 AM – Noon Contemporary Worship

Furthermore, to reach those younger adult families that are your ministry focus for your Mission, **I recommend you make this schedule change by Advent** (if you can arrange the fellowship hall for this contemporary worship by then) **or by Lent at the latest.**

So in order to attract younger adults and their children, it will be important to strengthen the contemporary worship service at First United Methodist Church. What will be focused is more experiential and participatory in style (like the use of an object or visual to focus the message or prayer of section of liturgy). It will include **a praise band** leading the congregation in praise songs as part of the opening of worship with hymns. **The children will sing once a month** (those who learned the song at the after school program). **The worship would be centered around a common theme that will be know at least 2 months in advance** so music, videos, prayers, liturgy, and/or skits can be developed to coordinate with the theme. **And again, the preaching will be experiential (easier without notes) and participatory (sharing stories and specific examples of how to live out the message in our daily lives).**

Fellowship and Sunday School Class

Developing another, new young adult Sunday School class and fellowship during this additional Sunday School is a key piece in the overall strategy of reaching, assimilating, and discipling young adults at First United Methodist Church. **This is a young adult church school class for those in their 20's to early 40's.** Young adults are looking for the development of significant relationships over time. Church School classes provide an excellent opportunity for meeting this need, as well as spiritual growth. I recommend that you begin the class with a **committed core group of 3-4 people** with the pastor who will give initial leadership in the following areas: Curriculum selection (like Serendipity), teaching, class caring, style (discussion, lecture, question and answer, etc.), and social activities. **Personally recruit people to come to the initial class session** after the above decisions are made so that you are inviting persons to attend a specifically defined class - not just the idea of a class. Figure that 60% of those who said "yes" will actually attend that first session - so recruit enough people that you have at least 10 people in attendance. (You need enough wood to start a fire.) Give enough time for sharing, caring, and prayer - as well as teaching and discussion. **At least monthly in the class, there would be a time for each participant to share with 2-3 other persons about their spiritual journey** by answering the question asked at every Methodist class meeting, "how goes it with your soul?" – or the 21st century counterpart "how have you experienced God in your life recently?". **Such support and accountability in our spiritual journeys is essential to stay the course of faith and continue to grow spiritually.** It is also a great way to share your faith with new person who come to the class but are not yet professing faith in Jesus Christ. This class would meet for Bible Study and discussion twice a month on Sunday mornings.

I recommend that the class develop an active social life – fellowship time once a month on Sunday mornings. This fellowship time would be open to all young adults to attend, so that they become a means of including new people that could then become active in the Sunday School class for Bible Study as well. This relational bonding is essential for the class to develop the trust that enables care. **And once a month would be a service project on Sunday morning. In this way, the young adult class includes and balances study and discussion, service, and fellowship.**

Also plan to add some related young adult activities, such as athletic teams, aerobics classes, Parents Day Out programs, prayer groups, share groups, etc. Add slowly and expand your young adult ministry over time. **And make sure that you continue to offer nursery care at every event that you intend to have young adults with children to participate!** In order to involved even more persons in intentional spiritual growth (including newer persons), **I would urge that you also begin some small groups that meet once or twice a month** – so that it will be easier for younger, dual income with children, busy and not churched adults to get started and connected with a small group for connection, involvement, care, and spiritual nurture. If the only opportunities to participate in a small group are weekly, you will find it very difficult to connect a large group of younger, newer, and very busy persons into a small group. I would also encourage that every member (and especially every leader) be in some small group for their spiritual growth, nurture, and care. **At least monthly in those groups, there would be a time for each participant to share with 2-3 other persons about their spiritual journey** by answering the question asked at every Methodist class meeting, "how goes it with your soul?" – or the 21st century counterpart "how have you experienced God in your life recently?". **Such support and accountability in our spiritual journeys is essential to stay the course of faith**

and continue to grow spiritually.

It will be essential to continue to start small groups by providing training for small group leaders (10 - 12 persons). Serendipity provides good material for this purpose but so do many other publishers and formats - **simply choose something that enables group support, care, study, and prayer.** **The small groups would meet twice a month for 90 minutes.** This schedule leaves time for small group leaders to also meet once monthly and mentoring and care once a month individually for member(s) of the group as needed. That means a small group leader commitment of two nights per month for the small group ministry and a small group participant can be in a small group and still give 2 nights a month for ministry while keeping a commitment of one night per week for both small group and ministry team. **After leader training, encourage the participants to team up in 2s and start a small group. I suggest Carl George's book *Prepare Your Church for the Future* as your potential handbook for this process.**

Staffing

I recommend the addition of staff of 3 part time positions to develop teams to develop ministry for children and youth. This includes a Coordinator of Junior High Youth Ministries (5-6 hours per week), a Coordinator of Senior High Youth Ministries (5-6 hours per week), and a Coordinator of Children's Ministries (10-12 hours per week). There had been a youth pastor in the past – and it is time for staffing for youth ministry again now. Each of these positions is to help develop the ministry in each area with a team of 4-6 other volunteers by planning, coordinating, and implementing these ministries.

2. Expand Participation. Expanding participation then follows after aligning ministry with the mission and vision. It was a topic of significant interest throughout the ministry life of the church, the leaders of the church, and the staff. Here are some key ingredients to helping expand participation.

Moving from an Informing to an Inviting Congregational Culture.

Several persons at the consultation emphasized a desire for more volunteers, more participation. This is a key ingredient for assimilation and for the human resources to expand the ministries that God is leading First United Methodist Church to accomplish. Several persons shared with me concern that there is a **core of people who help out with ministry however, whenever, and whatever they can.** But this base of participation must expand dramatically if ministry is to expand and persons are to become growing disciples by using their spiritual gifts in ministry.

There is a key transition in thinking and behavior that needs to occur to expand participation within the life and ministry of First United Methodist Church. **Simply informing people about opportunities to participate is not adequate to guide and inspire most of them into participation and involvement** - whether through bulletins, newsletters, pulpit announcements, sign up sheets, or general “invitations” to come and help. **The church must focus on inviting people** (rather than simply informing people) **to participate, especially around their gifts, passions, skills, talents, and abilities.** This change in style will be especially helpful and immediately relevant in several ministry areas within the life of the church (but by no means limited to these areas).

Now this inviting will be far more effective if several things are also true. It will be more effective if **we identify the gifts, talents, passions, and interests** of the person we are

inviting so the invitation lines up with who they are. It will be more effective if the **invitation is personal** (face-to-face or phone-to-phone), specific (for this event at this time), and relational (I am inviting you to do this *with me*). I will also be more effective if you invite to be **involved in ministry on a team** where I can do rather than mostly meet. It will be more effective if there are opportunities to **invite folks to participate once or twice a month** (especially initially) rather than only weekly. The appendix also includes some helpful resources for describing teams and identifying people's gifts and talents.

These areas of ministry that can benefit by increased participation by inviting instead of just informing are newcomer assimilation, starting new Sunday School classes, teacher mentoring, volunteer system, and Trustees work days – to name a few. The process of how to better use invitation in these specific areas are further described in greater detail in the respective sections of the recommendations that is coming next in this report. **Let me simply say that this change can make a significant difference in the involvement and morale of the congregation if it is done, widely, consistently, continually, and enthusiastically.**

Team Based Ministry

The key principle around which this structure is based is **“healthy organizations consistently match authority with responsibility”**. The organizations that do this consistently and broadly throughout the organization tend to have greater involvement, enthusiasm, passion, and commitment. This is particularly important in the life of the church. To match authority with responsibility means that the persons that have the responsibility to do the ministry are also given the authority to make the necessary decisions to accomplish that ministry – within appropriate boundaries. These boundaries include the purpose or mission of the church, the area of responsibility they have been given, the budget they have (with option to ask for more), and the policies of the church – both local (as the process for reserving dates and space) and denominational (as the Book of Discipline). **In other words, within boundaries the doers decide.**

Another important factor in recommending the structure that I have discussed with many persons during my time at First United Methodist Church is that the **younger and less churched the volunteer, the more the volunteering needs to be short term, hands on, and purpose driven** (especially those under age 45). Short term may mean as little as once for a couple of hours initially. Hands on means that we don't spend a lot of time in meetings talking about what we are to do; we do it (it's the Nike generation!). Purpose driven means that what we do clearly help us accomplish the important purpose of the church *and* make a real and visible difference in the life of someone. Older members over age 55 who have been churched for a long time tend to volunteer out of duty, loyalty, and responsibility (“it is my church and I will help however I can and as I am needed”). So committees often work well as a way of involvement for older members who participate out of duty, loyalty, and responsibility. But younger and less church members look at 3 year terms, lots of meetings, and fuzziness about how this helps others or accomplishes our purpose - and they back away. There must be an attractive structure to enable these younger, less churched persons to participate.

There is! That is why **the recommendation I discussed with many of the church leadership is to move toward ministry teams as the basis of doing ministry and involving volunteers.** The term may be new but the concept is not. Choir, ushers, and the shut in visitors are just a few examples of teams. **Teams do.** They meet only as needed in order to accomplish

their ministry. **As Herb Miller puts it, “ministry team members give time and energy to a particular ministry about which they feel a sense of God’s call and to which they bring a special skill, passion, or spiritual giftedness.”** Ministry teams give persons an opportunity to use their gifts in ministry, and to work together as a source of fellowship. Ministry teams don’t primarily talk and meet; they do! Teams end when the ministry is finished. Some ongoing teams encourage participants to sign up for a few months or up to a year and then decide whether or not they wish to continue or pursue a different ministry. And as persons grow in their participation, they also grow in their commitment as the ministry is connected to living out our faith in Jesus Christ.

Let me hasten to say that **committees are still an important part of the organizational life and structure** of First United Methodist Church. I am recommending that the role of the committees be focused to helping teams better do their ministry. **One of the primary things committees will now do is support the ministry teams** connected to it in their mutual area of ministry. This support does not mean directing the actions of the teams or controlling their decisions. This support is **communicating regularly** with their ministry teams (not primarily by coming to meetings but in **phone calls and conversations** with the leaders of the ministry teams) to see how they can help – resources, funds, information, and potential personnel for the team. The committee also supports by coordinating the teams – **seeing that the teams are doing their ministry and helping coordinate all of the scheduling** (seeing that dates and space are reserved for the ministry and not just assumed to be available). **Committees will also develop new teams** to further expand its effectiveness in its area of ministry (like the Evangelism Committee developing the visitation team to make a brief welcoming visit to all resident visitors after they visit worship the first time)- the idea for which may come from the Evangelism Committee or from someone else who comes to them eager to start this new team). And you do not have to be a member of the committee to be a member of the ministry team. My expectation is that all members of the committees will be a part of at least one ministry team. The new purpose of committees means that they will need to meet less often (4 - 5 times per year) and require fewer persons.

This will require the Church Council to function as a reporting and permission giving body so that the ministry teams are free to do their ministries. When these bodies are working well they will take very few votes. As long as the ministry team stays within the ministry area for which it is responsible, stays within its budget, adheres to church policies, and coordinates calendar with the rest of the ministries - the ministry team is free to decide how to do the ministry it is to do. In other words, **the principle involved is to match authority (the power to make the decision) with responsibility (those that are to do the ministry).** **Accountability then is in coordinating ministry** (seeing that it is occurring and it see what help, if any, is needed to be effective), **not controlling it** by having to approve every other decision in the life of the church. Committees then function like councils to deploy, coordinate, hold accountable, and support the ministry teams so that people can be in ministry with a minimum of meetings. **Ministry may need a meeting now and then to coordinate and facilitate ministry - but going to a meeting is not doing ministry.** A "flattened" organizational structure like you are already moving toward is a vital key to vital ministry by many volunteers.

The Church Council not need to meet more than quarterly to accomplish its purpose and function. To meet more frequently is to either do the work of the committees and ministry teams (and thereby over function) or spend undue time in reporting and not use time productively. **The**

style of reporting will be to focus on results for the sake of the mission rather than simply reporting activity. Each ministry area will then report in response to the following kinds of questions:

- **What results have you achieved to help us accomplish our Mission?**
- **What did you try for the sake of the Mission that didn't work as expected? What did you learn from this? What will you then do differently next time?**
- **What next steps are you planning to live out our Mission in your area of responsibility?**

So instead of controlling things, leaders lead and continue to accept authority with responsibility and thereby keep morale high. The Church Council could continue to designate a key issue for exploration each meeting so there is another significant reason to come and meet for the expansion of ministry and vision of the church. I believe this might well further strengthen Church Council participation and enthusiasm.

A key to increasing the participation of the congregation in ministry is the development of leadership - **leadership that will involve others in ministry by implementing the effective volunteer system** described earlier in this report. There are already many good leaders at First United Methodist Church, but more participants and more ministry means a need for more effective leaders. One of the most effective methods of leadership development is mentoring - having a potential leader work as an apprentice co-leader with an established, effective leader. This is a key strategy for small groups (as detailed previously) but can also work for leaders of various committees, boards, and especially ministry teams. **Use a team of leaders for each ministry team so that leaders are constantly being trained, equipped, and supported for ministry.** It also will enable continuity of ministry if the leader is suddenly gone from their position. Continue to develop leaders so that you can continue people in ministry.

The **role of leaders** in this system of volunteerism is **different**. It is not so much to simply do ministry but to **involve others in ministry with the leader** through effective leadership. **Delegation takes precedence over doing (especially with the staff, which is a key transition for the staff to expand ministry effectively).** Participation is the key to growing ministry, and leaders that enable an effective volunteer system understand that they are the key to participation. **Leadership is not about control but about enabling ministry to occur with the gifts and talents of others together, using ministry teams.**

The role of the pastor then becomes leadership development with a team of 2 - 3 other effective, experienced lay leaders to guide these leadership development sessions. Gather your leaders, potential new leaders you wish to develop (especially younger potential leaders), and staff together at least 4 - 6 times a year for additional training, support, and accountability in these intentional leadership development sessions led by the leadership development team. An excellent resource for this kind of training is the new training resource for leaders by Church of the Resurrection *Leading from the Heart*. The staff then effectively lead by mentoring leaders through regular, ongoing dialog about the ministry of the church (particularly in each leader's area of responsibility) rather than attending most of the meetings that occur in the life of the church - especially since the number of committee meetings will dramatically decrease. This role as a leaders of leaders will be enhanced as he continues to network regularly with other church leaders to hear their insights on the direction of the church and then share what they see are the key issues and how to address them, continually listening, modifying, and focusing how to do the best ministry that First United Methodist Church can do to accomplish

God's purpose.

In conclusion, **let me affirm this bold step to enhance participation and ministry in the life of First United Methodist Church.** As with all things new, this process of developing and supporting ministry teams will be awkward. **There is a learning curve for developing leaders** who do not control but whom instead support and offer accountability through increased communication and coordination. **But the results of more persons using their gifts and passions in ministry and growing thereby in their faith and discipleship in Jesus Christ is worth the change, the adjustment, the learning, and the potential resistance.**

Intentional Volunteer System

Expanding participation also will require becoming better at involving volunteers intentionally in ministry. Many persons at the consultation emphasized a desire for more volunteers, more participation. This is a key ingredient for assimilation and for the human resources to expand the ministries that God is leading the First United Methodist Church to accomplish. **This crucial area of ministry would be the primary focus of the staff to use this process to expand the ministry of volunteers.**

To live out your mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ is exciting - and requires a significant expansion of ministries. Doing this with the same pool of 20% of your worshipping congregation is not a good solution but one that will lead to being overwhelmed, frustrated, and burned out. **The key to expanding ministry will be expanding the number of persons in ministry.** And crucial to that is this principle - **you will never, ever, ever recruit well until you first identify well!**

This first means to **identify the ministry well** that you want to invite people to serve as a part of. To identify ministry well means to do the following: identify how the ministry will help us **fulfill our mission**; what **end result** you hope will occur through this ministry (3-4 sentence picture of the results, which gives those serving a target and a basis for evaluation); **gifts and skills** needed for the ministry; **time commitment** needed; and **resources, information, and help** that is available.

Recruiting then is inviting someone to be involved in this ministry by asking them personally (phone or face-to-face). So bulletin and pulpit announcements, sign up sheets, newsletter articles do not recruit - they inform (which is good, but does not help involve many people in ministry - especially those not already involved). **But to recruit well, you must first identify well the gifts, talents, skills, abilities, and passions of the people you want to help get involved in ministry.** This requires an active process of identification, connected with a database that makes it easy for those recruiting persons for ministries to have access to this information. And how can you find out the gifts, talents, skills, abilities, and passions of the people you want to help get involved in ministry? Well, there are at least four ways: **spiritual gifts inventories; time and talent surveys** (but make sure they are a talent survey and not a "fill our slot" survey - and that everyone who fills one out is contact with an opportunity for ministry based on their talents - unlike in the past); **observation** (what do persons do well and enjoy doing); and **interview** (ask them what they enjoy doing, what they would like to do, what they are good at). If you ask someone to do a ministry without any identification, then a "match" is unlikely and you will probably have less than 10% of persons respond positively to your invitation. **But if you ask them to serve in an area for which they have interest and gifts/talents, then probably half will say "yes" to your invitation to serve. And if they can**

do it as part of a team so they don't have to be there all the time, the odds are even greater. And if they can serve with persons they enjoy being with or working with, then the chances of them serving are very great (well over 80-90%). But to recruit this well, you first must identify well.

I recommend that a time and talent survey be consistently used. This is a list of talents and skills that can be used, as opposed to a list of jobs in the life of the church. It is worth 10 minutes of time in worship to fill out the surveys in order to get wide involvement with the surveys (done on a Sunday when ministry/service is the theme of the service and sermon). Then make sure that these are widely circulated and used, so people are not disappointed and feel that they are unwanted and that the survey was a waste of time. For example, it will be beneficial for the office volunteers to use their talents to help with specific tasks, rather than each one sit in the office for a proscribed time period.

I also recommend that spiritual gifts inventories be offered prior to time and talent surveys. The spiritual gifts inventories can help people consider where God has gifted them for ministry. Then they can select the areas they wish to serve on the Time and Talent Survey based on their perception of their spiritual gifts. An effective volunteer system maximizes participation by making participation a rewarding experience. Most churches don't have a commitment problem; they have a participation problem that the church can solve by having an effective volunteer system. **And as people participate, they become committed.** So the key is participation (even for financial giving!). **Here are 5 essential steps to an effective volunteer system.**

Recruitment. Newsletters, announcement sign-up sheets, etc. - never recruit; they only inform! **Recruitment is done person-to-person** (best is face-to-face; second best is by phone). There is not short-cut to effective recruitment. Leaders are key recruiters, inviting persons to participate in a particular ministry (and Time & Talent Surveys and Spiritual Gifts Inventories can be a tremendous asset in this process). Each ministry you recruit for will have a clear description of purpose, results desired, time required, skills needed, etc.

Educating. Volunteers need to be educated in the following areas: what **results** are expected, what **skills** are needed, what **information** is helpful, what **resources** are available (volunteers, financial, staff, information, etc.), what **support and accountability** is offered, and anything else that will enable them to be effective in their ministry. If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well - and that requires educating (whether it takes 15 minutes or 15 weeks).

Supporting. Volunteers need adequate, ongoing support to continue to be effective. Such support includes but is not limited to **attention, resources, accessibility to expertise, and accountability.** Leaders provide excellent support for their volunteers. **Communication is a key ingredient of support** - listening to the needs of those in ministry and sharing the resources and skills needed to be effective in the ministry to which each person is called by God to fulfill.

Thanking. **Everyone needs to be appreciated.** And churches are often notorious for neglecting this, assuming that the job is its own reward. While true, thanking well does go a long way toward a happy volunteer, willing to volunteer again!

Evaluating. **Each ministry is evaluated on the basis of whether it accomplished what it intended to or not.** If so, we want to know why it worked so we can repeat that success in ministry. If not, then we will want to ascertain why it didn't so we can learn from the experience in order to be more effective next time. That way, **it isn't at all a failure but a learning experience toward effective ministry.**

So there is a key transition in thinking and behavior that needs to occur to expand participation within the life and ministry of First United Methodist Church. **Simply informing people about opportunities to participate is not adequate to guide and inspire most of them into participation and involvement** - whether through bulletins, newsletters, pulpit announcements, sign up sheets, or general “invitations” to come and help. **The church must focus on inviting people** (rather than simply informing people) **to participate, especially around their gifts, passions, skills, talents, and abilities.** This change in style will be especially helpful and immediately relevant in several ministry areas within the life of the church (but by no means limited to these areas). Some examples of those areas of ministry that can benefit by increased participation by inviting instead of just informing are newcomer assimilation, starting new Sunday School classes, teacher mentoring, volunteer system, and Trustees work days. **Let me simply say that this change can make a significant difference in the involvement and morale of the congregation if it is done, widely, consistently, continually, and enthusiastically.**

An effective volunteer system does all 5 of these things well: recruiting (or inviting), educating, supporting, thanking, and evaluating. And an effective volunteer system increases participation, which increases commitment.

To facilitate this critical process, **I recommend the addition to the staff of a quarter time Lay Mobilization Coordinator.** This staff member would be responsible to oversee Time and Talent Surveys, Spiritual Gifts Inventories, and overseeing the volunteer system with the help and support of the rest of the staff. This person would also work to make sure appropriate training, support and accountability was in place for the volunteers in ministry. I would recommend that the person filling this role could benefit from training by Sue Mallory with Leadership Network and utilize her book *The Equipping Church*.

3. Establishing a Building Committee and Facility Plan.

I recommend that the starting place for discerning the best option for fulfilling your mission - not only in the present but also well into the future - **is to decide first what criteria you will use to evaluate the various options for property and facility.** If you do not intentionally and purposefully determine the criteria, many people will tend to use their own criteria, which will tend to be that of convenience (what is easiest), continuity (little or no change), and cost (keep as low as possible currently, without considering future costs). I want to offer the following criteria - which I think is a far better criteria for evaluating your options for your future property and facility needs, based on accomplishing your mission:

- **the potential to attract and reach unchurched people**
- **adequate space for worship, fellowship, education, programs and ministries, welcoming, parking, and storage**
- **visibility (to attract new people)**
- **accessibility**
- **long term stewardship**

Now describing this is risky for me – because you may come up with an even more effective plan through the discernment process listed below. **But I particularly affirm developing a new facility to replace the current sanctuary building.**

The current facility is old and limiting for your growth. The cost of maintaining it continues to rise. **And for long term stewardship, a new facility makes better sense than**

maintaining what you have. If you keep your current sanctuary building for the next 40 years and therefore continue to maintain it, the cost is likely to average about \$20,000 per year for those 40 years – or a total of \$800,000! And at the end of that 40 years, you still have an even older and much less adequate building for worship, ministry, and outreach for your Mission. Or you could invest in a new building for which you already have \$800,000 earmarked in your Endowment Fund. Add to that the \$800,000 you are now not spending on major maintenance on the new facility over those same 40 years and you already have \$1.6 million dollars to that new facility. Add to that your capacity for a 3 year capital campaign of \$400,000+ and a second 3 year campaign of \$250,000 – and you could have a new facility of up to \$2.2 million dollars for the next 40 years instead. To me, the long term stewardship is clearly in the direction of a new facility.

The key features I see included in this new facility include a sanctuary for up to 250 persons; a Community Life Center with kitchen for large groups meetings; fellowship; eating; recreation; and alternative, contemporary worship; office space; Sunday School for children; a youth center (perhaps on a lower level beneath the Community Life Center); modern restrooms; and community outreach missions. This new facility provides great space for a variety of ministries with children and youth especially - for children there could be Upward Basketball, recreation space for the nursery school and additional children's programs with this program and recreation space) and for youth a youth center that might include meeting and discussion space (with video capacity and sound system), game area, snack bar, conversation and small group areas that also provides excellent opportunity to become a community youth outreach. For younger adults, it provides a great venue for recreational and fitness ministries. Again, 52% of unchurched adults under the age of 45 said that they would be drawn to a church that could also meet their recreational needs so a Community Life Center offers great space to reach out to younger adults as well.

This facility and property expansion and enhancement would then be supported by a major capital fund drive, led by a professional in the field so that the financial capacity of the congregation can be appropriately challenged and the result be a facility that can do the ministry you want for Jesus Christ well into this century. If you first establish your Building Committee at a Charge Conference and give them the responsibility to come to a Church Conference with a building plan and a funding plan, then central to the funding plan would be the fund drive to determine how much of a project you can afford before you vote on it at the Church Conference. Then the final Charge Conference can approve the final building plan and contractor and financing.

This will likely take a year to discern and another year or two for the capital fund drive and construction. Therefore, it will be important to stay focused on the development of the ministries with younger adult families during the next 3 years while this process unfolds so that you continue to live your Mission and bear fruit even as you are increasing your potential for your Mission with a new, expanded facility. So name a Building Committee (as required by *The Book of Discipline*) in order to begin to do this study of future building needs and make a recommendation to the congregation within a year.

While we are doing our mission in a way that honors who we are, it is important that we communicate well, especially amidst changes. Communication is a key amidst change and transition in order to keep us together as a congregation. **The analogy I use is that of the hay wagon** (shared with me by a lay woman in South Dakota). Some persons believe that getting the

hay to the barn as quickly as possible is the goal. Those persons accelerate the hay wagon as they enter the curve (change), do not signal ahead, turn the wheel abruptly without warning, and as a result find a third of the bales thrown off into the ditch at the curve. When they get to the barn with two-thirds of the load, they remark that that's just what happens when you take a curve (change). **Other persons, anticipating a curve (change) ahead, signal (communicate) far in advance of the curve. They slow down as they approach the curve. They turn the wheel gradually in the curve and take it smoothly with very few bales ending up in the ditch. Then they accelerate slowly after the curve has been taken. This is a different philosophy of change and communication.** This latter model of communication amidst change is the model I used with you on our final night together and the model I recommend you emulate (and modify to fit your situation) as you communicate future significant change with the congregation.

The model for continuing to communicate important decisions that impact the whole church like a building project is to **begin by having the Building Committee share current progress every 2-3 months with the congregation** (including particularly where previous congregational input has helped shape the progress of the Building Committee). Then the congregation gets into **conversation groups** for about half an hour to discuss the following questions: 1) what **excites** you about the presentation as we do our mission in a way that honors who we are? 2) what **concern or questions** do you have about this presentation we do our mission in a way that honors who we are? 3) what **better ideas** do you have as we do our mission in a way that honors who we are? 4) what **additional information** do you have as we do our mission in a way that honors who we are? (Notice that all of the presentation and subsequent discussion centers around doing our mission through our identity.) **Then the Building Committee has an opportunity to get feedback from their discussion to the larger group, recorded on newsprint.** This is also a time of **open discussion**, reflecting non-defensively on what has been shared so it can be understood and enhanced. Finally, **this open feedback and discussion is summarized in the church's newsletter and a copy of the information on the newsprint is made available to all who request it.** I also affirm your use of your web site to communicate about the building process!

Being consistent and intentional about communication, especially amidst change and transition, is important so the congregation can move together to live out the mission in a way that honors who we are. There may be some who choose not to go with us on this journey with God centered in our mission and identity; they are welcome to come but cannot be coerced to do so. Neither will we abandon the mission we have from God in order to stay with them in a place of their comfort. **We are called by God live out our mission in a way that honors who we are – and so we will. But we will discern what that means and live that out as a community that communicates and cares.**

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Youth Ministry. The present strategy for youth ministry includes Sunday School and confirmation. The goal is to develop within the youth ministry a **good balance of experience for social, emotional, and spiritual growth.**

I recommend (as I shared earlier in this report) adding to staff part time coordinators for junior high and senior high ministries- who will each develop 4-6 adult counselors who will serve each twice a month – which is how often each group would meet. These counselors

will play a vital role in relating their Christian faith to the youth and helping decide and implement the programs and activities of the youth ministry, **along with the youth themselves** (especially Senior High, who need ownership in the ministry if you expect commitment and involvement). The counselors will be a part of an every other month youth council with the coordinator and the youth representatives and officers to give direction and leadership to the youth ministry, making sure it is well directed and organized. I also recommend expanding the visibility of the youth within the congregation through participation within the worship service (especially the new contemporary worship service) and other ministries as the youth choose to volunteer. A key issue will be to focus on developing cohesion in each group so supportive community for each youth can be experienced and expanded.

In addition, I recommend the development of a Logistics Team for the youth group. This team can be made up of parents and other adults who will organize the details of events and trips as their contribution to the ministry. Developing this team to help lead the groups and coordinate details will be key for each group to continue to grow and reach new youth for Jesus Christ. **I also encourage the development of a Prayer Team** (persons who will pray regularly for the youth ministry and be prayer partners with each youth) **and a Communication Team** (who can coordinate announcements, e-mails, phone calls, etc. to keep youth informed, invited, and connected to the youth ministry and to Jesus Christ).

I also highly support that the group be divided into 2 groups – Junior High and Senior High. The primary reason for continuing to have 2 groups is to expand the number of youth participating in the youth group(s). It is difficult to sustain the interest of all youth across such a large age spectrum so usually the group loses especially the older and sometimes even the younger youth and the group tends to be made up predominantly of those in the middle. The groups will be able to grow beyond 20-25 in attendance as each group continues to utilize small groups for discussion – or, in other words, as each group continues to function like a large group, using **large group principles** (developing small groups for discussion and sharing within the larger group that meets for recreation and fellowship).

2. Staffing. I am recommending the style of **staffing that will enhance participation of laity in ministry at First United Methodist Church where staff primarily develop ministers rather than do ministry. Moving to this focus on equipping, developing, and delegating will be essential to expand participation of the congregation in ministry and enabling them to thereby also grow spiritually by serving with their gifts.**

I affirm the regular monthly staff meetings with all available the program, support, and custodial staff there to communicate about calendar and upcoming events for preparation and publicity. Then the program and pastoral staff can meet to plan, implement, and evaluate programs and ministries, issues of care, newcomer assimilation, and other concerns of the congregation. Communication is a key to working effectively together and staff meetings is a central part of that communication. The staff works well together and relates well, which are major assets in expanding the role and function of the staff as a team. Most of the program staff are specialists who are working hard in their area of specialty to develop ministers, rather than primarily doing the ministry themselves.

I also affirm an annual review of each staff member by the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) with a self-evaluation of the staff member themselves. This evaluation will focus around end results that have been clearly delineated and agreed upon in the ministry

description that each staff member will have helped develop. These results are in harmony with the Purpose and Ministry Focus of the church, so what each staff looks to accomplish in ministry for Jesus Christ also fulfills the purpose and vision of the church as well. **A key area for evaluation will be leadership of staff - how they are developing others for ministry around the principles delineated earlier in this report. Effective delegation of ministry and development of ministry teams will be essential for expanded participation** in the life of First United Methodist Church. And ongoing, visible, unrelenting, consistent, verbal support by the SPRC of the staff as they delegate and develop people in ministry will be essential for them to be effective.

The ministry description for every member of the staff will begin by **clarifying the area of responsibility** and how it is **essential in helping accomplish the purpose of the church**. This clarification is what keeps what staff do as a ministry with critical meaning and not just a job to be done.

Then comes the identification of **key roles** (4 - 5 for full time persons, 1 - 3 key roles for part time persons) that the staff person is responsible for. **For example, the key roles of a pastor** of a becoming large church tend to be the following: **#1 – Champion of the Purpose** (helping discern the Purpose with the leadership, communicating that Purpose and helping staff and leaders to the same, and helping staff and leaders align all the ministry and decisions with that Purpose); **#2 – Lead Worship and Preaching** (to inspire and communicate God’s Word and Purpose to the congregation, along with the other preachers and music leaders and staff – and to preach at least monthly in each worship service to stay connected and connecting with all persons in every worship service); **#3 – Leadership Development** of staff and other lay leadership (by helping leaders become developers and focus ministries and decisions on the Purpose); and **#4 - Oversee People Care** (to see that the consistent systems are in place of care for all the newcomers and congregation, as well as to provide care directly).

Next comes a **2 - 3 paragraph “picture” of what the ministry of each staff member will look like in 3 years is the ministry is done reasonably well**. This is the basis of what results that we are looking for to live out the Purpose in the next couple of years or so. You cannot hold accountable well or support well what you have not first clarified – and this is the section of the ministry description that brings that clarity of results.

Next might come a few duties and responsibilities with the position – always flexible to be able to accomplish the end result “picture”. **Then each staff will develop 1 - 3 key goals each quarter for each role that will best help the end result picture be able to come true**. Staff meetings are then a time **to review what each staff has accomplished (to celebrate, affirm, learn, and plan) and the next steps they plan to accomplish each of their goals** – and holding them accountable to keeping at them, as well as offering support and encouragement as they are accomplished and new learnings emerge in the process.

So on this basis, **the staff meeting process might start with everyone together** for devotions and prayer, communicating upcoming events, and sharing mutual concerns – before the administrative and custodial staff leave. I think it is important for the staff to eat and fellowship together at least monthly. I also believe that in order to build the staff as a team, **the whole staff does need to meet for support, accountability, visioning, and strategy at least 6-8 times a year, including all part time staff and music staff (which may mean meeting periodically on an evening or Sunday afternoon or another time that all staff can gather)**. You have already made the shift toward ministry specialists to facilitate persons in the

congregation being involved in ministry. This is a key staffing style for you to continue to accomplish your mission. **You are to be congratulated for this insight!** These key roles (which can be combined according to the gifts, skills, talents, and available time of the potential staff persons, including current staff) continue this healthy trend toward ministry specialists equipping persons for ministry. This does not imply that administrative roles are unimportant (not at all) but they will continue to function and be shaped in ways that help facilitate the ministry of the church as well.

The appendix also includes some additional resources for staffing that you might find helpful in this process.

3. Unifying Factors. One of the strengths of First United Methodist Church is the sense of unity among the congregation. So, naturally, **there is concern about maintaining this sense of unity of the church as it grows in membership and worship attendance and diversity of worship styles**. In fact, there is a temptation to believe that unity is rooted in uniformity - in other words, the more we are alike and do everything together or similarly (like worship), the more unified we will be and become. In fact, St. Paul points out to the church at Corinth just the opposite - **unity is strengthened by diversity** because it is our diversity that allows us to fully use our gifts and include all of the people God intends to include in the church family. So diversity of worship styles, musical styles, Sunday School classes, ministry groups, or small groups need not divide us at all if we have strong, vital, appropriate unifying factors. The key unifying factors for First United Methodist Church seem to me to be the following: being purpose centered; seeing each form of worship and spiritual development group as part of that same purpose; and developing several, large, all church fellowship events. Let me explore each one individually.

First United Methodist Church needs to center around a common purpose in order to continue to be unified. As I discussed at length in the foundational recommendations, it is imperative that First United Methodist Church **not only have a Mission Statement and know it, but also use it** consistently throughout the life and decision making of the whole church. This will enable the church to remain unified within its increasing diversity (as large churches do). Everyone will be moving in a common direction and for a common cause, regardless of where they serve or when they worship. **Purpose is central to unity.**

Connected to this unifying factor is a common recognition that each worship service with its somewhat different style are all important, all vital to the spiritual life and growth of those who participate in that worship service and therefore valid and valuable. No one style is more important than the other in accomplishing the purpose of making disciples for Jesus Christ - either new disciples or helping continue with the growth of longer tenured disciples. Worshiping in the same way or even all together at the same time does not produce unity - if it were true every small church with a single worship service would be unified (and trust me, they are not all that way). **First United Methodist Church must continue to affirm what God has already confirmed - that each style of worship is a valid way for growing spiritually and therefore valuable and essential to the common purpose of making disciples for Jesus Christ**

I also recommend that the church hold 4 - 6 large, fun, fellowship events each year. These events allow people to get to know each other and develop relationships with one another, even if they regularly attend a different worship service. And as you add another Sunday worship service, **these events will become even more important as "glue" that holds the church**

together. These events could include a church picnic, Christmas caroling, New Year's Eve party, hayride, game night, Easter egg hunt, Valentine's banquet, etc. I applaud the fact that you have already starting doing this. As important as such events are (perhaps a different class or group in the church to take an annual turn host such an event for the whole church), even more important to keep First United Methodist Church together is to stay clearly focused on your purpose and vision. **But large fellowship events are a definite plus in a large growing church as First United Methodist Church. Churches who want to be like extended, growing families need to eat and play together - as all other healthy families do.**

CLOSING THOUGHTS

It is a joy to share with you again in looking at your ministry for Jesus Christ. So what's in store for First United Methodist Church in the next 5 years? I believe great things with God! You are indeed a church on the move.

I anticipate that over the next 5 years that **worship services will be thriving** and attracting young adults and youth, including the contemporary and traditional services; worship groups and opportunities have grown so each worship service has at least 2 participating musical groups each Sunday; you **communicate well** as a church and **consistently respect healthy boundaries; stewardship will dramatically increase;** the facility plan has been completed and a **new expanded worship, gathering, and program areas has been added;** the **young adult fellowship** will have 20 - 40 new growing Christians that are also participating in Sunday School classes, small groups, and the various ministries of the church; the **youth ministry has a middle high and a senior high group** that each regularly have 20+ participants **with 4-6 adults leaders in each; new leaders have emerged to develop new ministries; hands-on opportunities for ministry are expanding;** a new population group for intentional ministry has been identified and those vital ministries begun; all members will be included in a **redundant, consistent care system;** newcomers attracted by servant evangelism will be effectively **assimilated and disciplined in Jesus Christ; participation will dramatically increase** as will the ministries of the church; **the congregational culture is rapidly moving toward one of inviting; staff continues to expand** to coordinate and support the growing ministries of the church; and you have decided that it is time plan for your future in an intentional way by having another consultation with Doug Anderson - again!

This can be your future as you fulfill your purpose of glorifying God by making disciples for Jesus Christ. You can be the phoenix that arises out of the ashes of the fire. The choice, as always is yours. May you look not only in the mirror at your past but especially through the window, out into the community and into your future. And may your continuing choices of future ministries of outreach reflect the wisdom, compassion, commitment, dedication and service of the One we together claim - Jesus Christ our Lord. My prayers are with you. God bless you all always.

APPENDIX

Service Evangelism

Service evangelism work will well for First United Methodist Church because **it lives the values of service and compassion**. Service evangelism also enables First United Methodist Church to reach out to people for Christ and make disciples by making visible the compassionate love of Jesus Christ for *all persons* and thereby do its mission. That means that you can live out your mission by honoring who you are with power!

Service evangelism is a style of reaching out and creating awareness of the church as a caring, serving, organization directly meeting the immediate needs of potential newcomers through acts of kindness and service. One church that does this style of service evangelism extremely well is the Vineyard Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. The former pastor of that church, Rev. Steve Sjogren, has written a very helpful book entitled *Conspiracy of Kindness* that describes how their church has done service evangelism as a means of stretching beyond their comfort zone and reaching out into the community with acts of love that connect significantly with the persons they serve (or check out the web site at www.servantevangelism.org).

This style of creating awareness has tremendous potential for most every church. It is consistent with the gospel of God's great love in Jesus Christ that reaches out to serve others - and this is the heart of service evangelism. Service evangelism does not require special skills or even this spiritual gift of evangelism (sharing the Christian faith in a winsome way with someone we do not know) in order to participate. You simply need to be willing to help someone else in a tangible, concrete way. **And for younger generations, the mode for developing awareness is especially appealing for a couple of specific reasons.** First, it is **short-term**. The participant in service evangelism can come once on a Saturday morning to help out in a project and does not need to commit to long term involvement up front. Second, the participant in service evangelism sees immediately, up close, and personal **how they make a difference in the life of someone else**, which gives particular meaning to the act of service.

There are wide range of service projects that churches have used to reach out to others with the love of God and thereby created significant and often highly attractive sense of awareness within people of the larger community. One church distributed thousands of bottles of water to persons in the crowd watching the community parade during a hot, summer day. Each bottle had a card attached simply stating that God loves you and so do we at First United Methodist Church, with web site, address, and phone number listed. Another church went throughout the neighborhood on a Saturday morning and distributed light bulbs of the choice of the recipient, again offering a card with a simple message about God's light for our lives and information to be able to contact the church. **One thing that separates service evangelism form service is the note or card that extends an invitation and gives opportunity for connection and future relationship and response.**

Assimilation of Newcomers

Again, there are a number of pieces in this assimilation process that are already in place and working effectively at First United Methodist Church. **Already in place are the following parts of assimilation process: greeters; friendship; ushers; and greeted after the service by pastor and probably other laypersons.** Continuing to focus on hospitality will be essential

with newcomers.

Let me suggest some additional pieces that I believe will strengthen this process of assimilation and make it even more effective. This will involve additional lay persons in the process, which in itself is an advantage because it widens the contact with newcomers and enables more persons to participate in helping others feel a part of the church. This is analogous to running a relay race, with the "hand off" of information and caring for the newcomer essential for an effective result, which is to help newcomers belong before they join. This will require a team effort throughout, not just the involvement of the staff.

First, I would continue a team of 4 persons (taking turns) to do visits on newcomers after they have attended worship. This would be a 5 - 10 minute visit within 36 hours after the initial worship experience. So the teams of visitors would make their visits on Monday to make an even greater and more effective impact on those who visit worship. This call would include the *3 B's - Be brief, Be bright (positive), and Be gone* - and keep bringing the church mug. A lay visit is twice as effective at this point than a pastoral phone call. A visit within 36 hours has an 80% chance of newcomer(s) returning to worship; if within 72 hours a 60% chance; and if after one week, 15% chance. Timing and the 3B's are keys!

Second, I recommend that lay sponsors be recruited for newcomers before they join so the sponsor can play an instrumental role in assimilation. People tend to maintain the level of activity that they have when they join - so help people belong before they join, not after. The lay sponsor will help their newcomer(s) find their niche in the life of First United Methodist Church through a role, task, class, and/or group. This process will use information gathered by the pastor or trained team of lay persons during a listening visit with the newcomer in order to discover their gifts, talents, interests, and past experience. Multiple invitations and caring contacts are keys through the first 3 months after first attending (which is the time 75% of decide whether or not this will be their church). These invitations will be extended by a person in each ministry or class or group who is willing to invite newcomers to participate with them at the contact of the sponsor - in other words, developing and working an invitation network. **The operative principle is to connect people by inviting, not simply informing.** Inviting allows for personal connection to help people belong and feel more comfortable entering and participating in a group that simply informing can never do. The lay sponsor will also contact their new members at least every other month for the first year to see how things are going and if there are concerns that need to be addressed (since 75% of all new members drop out within a year of joining, usually starting at month 5 or 6).

Third, I recommend that Evangelism Committee keep track of the activity level of newcomers and support the visitation team, the newcomer sponsors, and help with invitations to newcomers. This system will need this group to support the staff in coordinating, monitoring, encouraging, and supporting this system. This whole process of newcomer assimilation is so critical to the life and mission of the church that it needs to be done constantly and consistently, with oversight of a specific group committed to that ministry.

Fourth, I recommend that 1 - 2 new groups be started each year so that there are new places for newcomers to belong. A group dramatically decreases its capacity to attract new persons after 12 - 24 months (because the sense of closeness that develops among the group runs counter to openness required to attract newcomers). I would especially encourage you to start new groups that will attract young adults, like the following: parents support groups/studies/training; church school classes; exercise class; recreation team(s) or opportunities;

young mothers support group; Bible studies; additional music groups; marriage enrichment group; and hands-on missions project. As you know from experience, *Alpha* can be a wonderful way to launch small groups, especially as an outreach to the unchurched.

Fifth, I suggest that you host a newcomer breakfast periodically. This is an opportunity to meet with the pastors, to gain an understanding of the range of opportunities for participation in the life of the church; and to have answers to important questions. It also allows the pastors to continue to develop and strengthen relationships with the newcomers.

Comprehensive Care System.

There is already a great deal of caring that occurs at First United Methodist Church. In addition to the basic, caring environment, there are several programs and ministries that are already in place and functioning to provide care to persons of the congregation on a regular basis. **The pastor does a variety of visitation, crisis care, and hospital calling** with persons - which can be enhanced by training and deploying lay visitors and care givers to share with the clergy in this vital ministry. There are Bible Studies and Sunday School classes to provide opportunity for fellowship and care. The choirs and musical groups are certainly relational, supportive communities. Each of these sources was identified and affirmed during my consultation for their caring nurture. **The church already does a lot of caring.**

This is not the issue. **The issue around care is developing a system where all the members are regularly, consistently, and adequately cared for** - including those who are not touched by the excellent network of care just previously listed. The key is a comprehensive care system that covers all the membership. Let me offer a **4 step process** to enable First United Methodist Church to develop its caring ministry because a church can only grow as large as its capacity to care for its members. So as you expand your capacity to care, you also expand your capacity to grow. Care and growth are vitally, integrally, and dynamically interrelated. **This ministry will be coordinated by a lay coordinator of care.**

The first step is to focus on the existing groups. Work to identify and/or develop a process by which each member in the existing group is cared for - that is, appropriately supported in a time of crisis or transition (birth, illness, death, change of job or residence, loss, divorce, graduation, etc.). **If a group meets at least monthly and is willing to make sure the members of its group are cared for, then it is a caring group.** Identify the care leader(s) of each group so the coordinator of care ministries can meet with them at least bi-monthly for ongoing support, training, encouragement, and accountability. This list of existing groups can include men's and women's groups, Bible Studies, choirs, circles, committees, ministry teams, Sunday School classes, and work groups - as long as they meet at least monthly and provide care for their members.

The second step is to follow-up those who do not sign in for worship at least 3 weeks in a row (by not signing the registration book at worship for 3 weeks). It takes only 21 days to develop a habit, including church absenteeism. Recruit 4 teams of 2 callers each (one for each week of the month and rotate 5th Sundays) who simply phone those who have not signed in for worship 3 consecutive weeks (but who are not infrequent or inactive in worship). This means that worship attendance will need to be tracked. The conversation simply states that you are phoning because it was noticed that the person/family had not registered their attendance, and you are wondering how things are. **The key is then to listen. Then ask if there are any prayer**

requests to be shared with pastor or prayer chain. The simple caring contact will tend to enable over half of those phoned to return to worship within a couple of weeks. Otherwise if left unnoticed, they could easily become inactive and entrenched in that behavior within 2 months. Again, a lay coordinator needs to meet with those phoning every 3 months for ongoing support, training, encouragement, and accountability.

The third step is to start small groups that have a solid component of care for its members built in. How to start these small groups has already been covered.

The fourth step is telecare. All persons not included in one of the above would be called every 4-6 weeks by a telecare giver. **Each telecare giver would have up to 7 households, with the purpose of a friendly contact to see if there are care needs for the household. Again, the offer to receive prayer requests and to share them appropriately can be a helpful, supportive act of caring.** Follow up teams for support can be developed, utilizing existing care process (support groups, Sunday School classes, care groups, prayer chain, etc.). Every 3 months, a lay coordinator will meet with the telecare givers ongoing support, training, encouragement, and accountability.

These 4 steps together with the current wide scope of caring can provide a comprehensive care system that includes all of your members and constituents at First United Methodist Church. It will take several months to put each step in place (and 12 - 24 months or more to put all the pieces in place) but such a consistent and deliberate process will make a significant impact on the current congregation and its future growth capacity over the next few years. The keys will be consistency and constancy - do this caring process all the time with everybody. When gaps of care occur (and they will!), you are aware because of the support and accountability built into the system and are ready and able to refocus your caring efforts.

Post Modern Ministry

It will be important as you develop ministry for younger adults and youth and children that this group is postmodern in their orientation and ministry that will be effective in reaching and discipling them will also need to be postmodern as well. (A great resource for understanding and implementing this is Leonard's Sweet's book *Post Modern Pilgrims*). In short, post modern ministry is EPIC – it is experiential, participatory, image driven, and connecting to God through others. This is why contemporary worship that uses praise music to help the worshipers interact and participate in the singing by experiencing the music and clapping works. It's also why you need to use teams for ministry to enhance participation. It's also why videos and dramas and objects for preaching work because of being visual. **So younger adult ministry means developing post modern ministry well. But you will also need to continue to do ministry well that reaches those 50 years old and older as well because they are also vitally important to the church, the ministry – and to God!**

Generational Differences and Evangelism

Let me describe for you the generational differences that I believe will be helpful for all the church (and especially the leadership) to be aware of and take into account as you do ministry, especially evangelism. I describe it this way, using my own family to illustrate. In my grandmother's generation (she would be 97), over 80% had an active Christian faith lived out in a church and if Protestant, most in a mainline Protestant church. In my mother's generation (she is 76), over 65% had an active Christian faith lived out in a church and if Protestant, most in a

mainline Protestant church. In my generation (I am 57), less than 35% had an active Christian faith lived out in a church and if Protestant, most not in a mainline Protestant church. In my children's generation (they are 24-34 years old), less than 20% had an active Christian faith lived out in a church and if Protestant, a strong majority not in a mainline Protestant church. And in my grandchildren's generation (they are 11 years to 11 months old), less than 10% are expected to have an active Christian faith lived out in a church and if Protestant, the vast majority not in a mainline Protestant church. **So, evangelism in mainline churches for over 50 years has primarily been reconnected disconnected persons (they already have Christian faith; they just need reconnected to a church). To reach younger generations (and there are 59% of them less than 45 years old), we will need to learn how to share our faith in Jesus Christ with them and therefore help unconnected persons to become connected to Christ and the church.**

Endowment Funds

The development of the endowment fund to continue to develop and expand ministry and help with the future expansion and upkeep of the facility is essential for the future health and strength of First United Methodist Church. Currently, there is approximately \$800,000 designed for new building and \$200,000 for building repair. This endowment under an Endowment Board can serve both purposes - mission/ministry and facilities. An example might be that undesignated monies will be placed in the following categories: 50% facilities, 40% mission/ministry (for new ministry or program initiatives like new music or instruments, mission trips, advertising to attract newcomers to the specific programs and ministries designed for them, and educational/recreational equipment for children, youth, and young adults), and 10% put back into principle as a hedge to inflation and difficult investment years. **I recommend that all gifts to the church be placed by the Trustees into the Endowment Foundation so the principle can be protected and only the interest spent in the above fashion.** You might also consider matching funds for request of the endowment fund (raise \$1 for every \$1 or \$2 that the endowment fund gives). This Endowment Fund is a significant vehicle for persons to be able to use in order to support their church that they love in perpetuity but for it to continue to function effectively, the principle must be protected.

I recommend that the Endowment Fund be regularly and widely publicized, with a goal for every member to remember the church in their will. A possibility is to begin by encouraging all leaders to remember the church in their estate planning - no gift is too small and I would trust the congregation to continue to be generous in this regard. **You might then publish annually a "thank you" list of people (not amounts) who have remembered the church in their will.** As members and constituents of First United Methodist Church see others (and especially leaders) include the church in their financial planning, others in the congregation will be encouraged to do so as well.

Staffing for Enhanced Participation

Let me begin by affirming the overall quality and effectiveness of the current staff. They are doing an outstanding job of ministry and they respect each other and their gifts and abilities. Communication seems good and morale and cooperation is very strong.

Any recommendation I make are by way of enhancing and expanding what effective ministry they are already having. In that spirit, I believe that it is important to emphasize the **key**

principles of staffing. These principles are essential to creating a climate and a system to enhance and expand participation among the members and constituents of First United Methodist Church. These principles are further explored with potential recommendations for ministry in this report. Now I will simply list and explain what these principles are.

First, the staff needs to continue to **be purpose-centered, not preference-driven.** This is a key function of the staff to assist and encourage the congregation to be purpose-centered. Having the Administrative Council focus reporting on results for the sake of the Purpose is one key way of staying purpose centered.

Second, the staff needs its ministry to be **results oriented, not activity oriented.** It is not enough to be busy; the staff and the church needs to be productive around the purpose. This then is the basis for evaluation of staff, rather than intention or preferences.

Third, the staff needs to **emphasize people, not programs** by its staff and ministry. The focus will be on developing people in their ministries, not on programs that maintain the institution. Rather than fill slots for programs with people, First United Methodist Church will seek to discover the gifts and talents of people so those can be used as central in their ministries. Programs become the outgrowth of people's ministries based on their gifts.

Fourth, **the primary ministry of the staff is to develop ministers, not to do ministry.** Staff will still do ministry, as all Christians are called to do, based on their gifts and talents. But their primary goal is to involve others in ministry with their gifts and talents so ministry can be multiplied and each participant can grow in their faith through the exercise of their gifts. This is the key principle for the staff to grasp and incorporate into the very heart of their ministry.

Fifth, **more people participate their way into commitment than commit their way into participation.** So the focus of the staff and the First United Methodist Church is on an effective volunteer system that will broaden and strengthen participation (as was described in the previous section).