

**CONSULTATION REPORT**  
**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, SIKESTON**  
February 21, 2009

INTRODUCTION

We, the consultation team, would like to thank the pastor, lay leadership and congregation of First United Methodist Church for the invitation to consult with this part of Jesus Christ's body. We read and digested the self-study document provided by the leaders, conducted interviews with staff members and led a focus group with members of the congregation. Everyone cooperated with us and provided all the information we requested. Our prayer is that God will use this process to enhance the ministry of the Gospel in this part of the world.

STRENGTHS

1. **THE PASTOR.** The people of First UMC are blessed with the leadership of Rev. Geoff Posegate. He brings an exceptional skill set to the ministry of the church. In particular, he shines as a preacher and teacher for the congregation.
2. **RESOURCES**—both people and finances. The church's ministry is strongly resourced with a depth of talented persons, people whose skills and experience, gifts and grace make possible the church's many ministries and the possibility of even more ways to respond to God's dream for their work together. What's more, the church has a very reasonable debt and persons within the congregation who have the financial resources to meet those commitments.
3. **LOCATION.** What a great location! The church has a decent size property, a fair number of parking spaces, and a high visibility along a highly trafficked roadway.
4. **BUILDING.** The building has an abundance of space and, with the exception of the Children's wing, is well maintained.
5. **CRISIS RESPONSE.** The church has a history of extravagant generosity in the face of various special needs and disasters like the most recent ice storm that struck the Sikeston community. People in the community know that First UMC, Sikeston can be counted on when there is need.

CONCERNS

1. **MISSION:** The current mission of this congregation is stated as "First. . . driven by Jesus Christ." This mission is not clearly focused on the Great Commission command to be outwardly focused, to make disciples of Jesus Christ. What's more, it is evident that the Great Commission is not being implemented with any degree of regularity or consistency. Relatively few people are becoming disciples of Jesus Christ in any given year. The hours spent in ministry, the dollars expended in ministry, and the energy expended in doing ministry are producing a poor harvest for Jesus Christ.

2. **MINISTRY STRUCTURE**: The staff and the administrative/committee structures of the church are not well-formed for meeting the Great Commission to make disciples of Jesus Christ. What's more, there is not an effective, integrated system to help people new to the congregation become connected to the church or mobilized for ministry, and for encouraging persons already within the congregation to use their gifts and talents to reproduce themselves in the making of disciples.

3. **CHURCH FACILITY**: The space used for children's ministry is not well-maintained to appeal to children and their families. New paint, tables, chairs, computers, and other resources are urgently needed for an effective children's ministry. There is no clear space for the youth to meet. There is no clear entrance to the church, nor are there directional signs indicating where first-time worshipers should go.

4. **WORSHIP**: There is a clearly-voiced perception among persons who attend the various worship services that the services and worship styles compete rather than complement one another and as a result, there is division within the congregation. This negatively impacts the church's witness within the community and effectiveness in making disciples.

5. **COMMUNICATION**: The communication streams within the church are negatively impacted by the complexity of the ministry structure. However, the newsletter and website need updating. The church needs to develop an electronic news cast, alerting participants to opportunities for ministry. All of these streams of communication need to be designed, not only with members' needs in mind, but to reach non and nominally churching persons.

## **PRESCRIPTIONS**

1. **MISSION**: The best way to bring unity to the church is by developing clarity and consensus about the mission of the church. The pastor in cooperation with other staff, and in consultation with the coach, needs to write a clear and precise mission statement that is outwardly focused on making disciples of Jesus Christ. This statement will be written and adopted by Church Council by Easter, April 12, 2009.

The pastor is then to call the staff, Church Council and congregation to a Day of Prayer. The purpose of this Day of Prayer is two-fold. The first purpose is to have a day of confession, asking God to forgive the congregation collectively and individually for not marshalling its many resources to lead many more people to Jesus Christ. This weekend of prayer and worship needs to be led by someone in the conference who will facilitate the prayers, collectively and individually. The second purpose of this day is to begin to ask God to give to this congregation a vision for reaching the community in which it exists. The congregation should ask God to break open the hearts of the people for the thousands that live in the community surrounding the church, most of whom do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. This Day of Prayer and confession needs to occur by May 30, 2009.

Following the Day of Prayer the appropriate person from the Conference needs to come to lead the congregation through an Envisioning Day. The Envisioning Day will occur by September 15, 2009. Following the Envisioning Day, Rev. Posegate will create a new Vision statement for the church which is to be completed by September 30, 2009.

Finally, the pastor and staff are to lead the congregation through a mission and ministry audit. The purpose of this mission and ministry audit is to determine how every ministry of the congregation helps implement the mission. The initial audit needs to be completed, approved by the Church Council, and implemented by February 1, 2010. Those ministries that do not implement this mission must either be changed within a year to fit the mission or discontinued at by February 1, 2011.

2. **MINISTRY STRUCTURE:** The pastor, in consultation with the coach, will do an audit of the church staff, making a recommendation for its reorganization and alignment with the church's mission. This recommendation will be given to the Pastor/Parish Relations Committee and Church Council to be implemented in stages and completed no later than July 1, 2010. The pastor, in order to prepare for the work recommended by the Healthy Church Initiative, will take a two month sabbatical by August 15, 2009 paid for by the church. All staff members will be expected to set goals, under the direction of the pastor that show how people are being led to Jesus in their ministry (numbers), how they are developing leaders (numbers), and how their area of responsibility will grow (a percentage). The staff will then be held accountable for meeting these objective, measurable goals in ways that align with the church's mission.

An Executive Team made up of the Trustee, Finance, Lay Leader, Ad Council and SPRC chairs will evaluate the administrative structure of First UMC, Sikeston in order to create and shape a streamlined, pastor-led, Accountable Leadership Model of governance which supports the mission of the church. This model will be implemented by January 1, 2010.

The staff will develop an effective, integrated system to help people new to the congregation become connected to the church or mobilized for ministry. The new system will encourage persons already within the congregation to use their gifts and talents to reproduce themselves in the making new disciples. There will be one person on staff other than the pastor who will be responsible and accountable for the effectiveness of this system.

Finally, expectations for members and leadership will be clarified raising the bar of expectations for those who participate as well as those who lead in the ministries of the church. The staff and the Executive Team will create and shape a new covenant for membership and a new covenant for leadership to be implemented by January 1, 2010.



Respectfully Submitted:

Rev. Bob Farr

Rev. Bart Hildreth