Checking In: Are Numbers Everything?

"But after this David felt terrible that he had counted the people. David said to the Lord, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, Lord, please take away the guilt of your servant because I have done something very foolish.” 2 Samuel 24:10 (CEB)

King David was getting anxious in his old age and fearing rebellion so he went against the Lord and counted his fighting men. He knew after he had done it, that it was wrong, and confessed his sin. God’s punishment came in the form of a plague on the people. David forgot who he served; he forgot what God had promised, and he took matters into his own hands. Numbers for strength and safety became more important than God’s promises to trust him for peace.

In the Church we are obsessed with numbers. For years numbers have been used to determine the success of a church: if the worship attendance is high and the offering plate if full, then the church must be doing well. But, do those numbers tell the full story? Jesus used 12 men to go into the villages healing the sick, teaching the people, proclaiming God’s Kingdom. 12—that is a small number. So were they successful? If you read the Acts of the Apostles, then the answer is yes, because those 12 men were transformed and were bold in their ministry and lives were transformed—thousands of lives.

So, what numbers should we be looking at to see if we are fulfilling our mission? Are worship attendance and offering totals all that matter? In 2017 the average church attender believes they are active if they are in worship once a month. That is different than 10 years ago. So worship attendance numbers can be deceiving. People are giving less to the church than in years past and they are giving less often. So does the weekly total reflect what is really happening? If our mission is to make disciples, how do we measure that? Is it worship attendance? Are disciples made only in worship? What about the conversations that happen at work or school? What about those that attend on Wednesday evening or Sunday youth?

How are we making disciples? How do the ministries we offer impact and transform lives? How many lives are changed for the better because of the ministry God has called First UMC to? I am more interested in those numbers, because I think they give us a better idea of how we are fulfilling our mission. I know many will disagree. Many want to know each week how many were in attendance and how much money was given. Those numbers are available for anyone who wish to know. But, I would like us to change the conversation and ask how many lives are being impacted and transformed for the Kingdom. Did you let someone know today through your words and actions that they are loved by God? That is a life impacted for the Kingdom. Did you help someone who can never repay you? That is a life impacted for the Kingdom. Did you hold your opinion when sharing it may have hurt another? Your life has been impacted by and for the Kingdom.

How are we transforming our world? How many people know God is love and they are loved because your life has been transformed and you are a disciple of Jesus Christ? Those numbers are what tell us what we need to know. But, just in case you are wondering—attendance in April was 844, and the offering received for the budget was well over $40,000. Let us trust God’s promises to be our safety and allow our lives to be transformed so we can be a part of God transforming others. Then we can count and measure and give glory to God for the work that He is doing through us. Join us in the journey of transformation!

See you Sunday,
Pastor Amy

Our mission is To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World. At First UMC Decatur, we do that as we Connect in Community, Grow in Faith, Serve in Love as followers of Jesus Christ.
Wisdom People  Wilma Pilkington opened with prayer at the May 17 luncheon at The Galley. Guest speaker Mary Pilkington shared her and Steve’s mission trip to Dominican Republic. They were with Dr. Ron Hammond DDS and Barnabas Task missions. Their goal is to have a self-sustaining clinic for those living in Cien Fuegos. “God put it on my heart,” stated Mary. She and Steve were given information about the people and the living conditions. “I didn’t feel we were blind-sighted, until we got there!” People’s homes were made from items found at the dump giving them squatter’s rights. The people are very poor, no security, bad health conditions, many diseases, no clean water. The tooth decay rate is very high! During the week, 565 people received dental care. It was very hot but people waited in line, some in pain, some teeth were black, teeth were pulled, filled, & cleaned. Leaving the dental clinic a pastor and lay leaders would talk with them. During that week 100 people received Jesus as their Savior. Mary assisted with filling teeth. Steve’s job was to clean and sterilize used instruments. Mary beamed sharing her journey, photos, and knowing she had helped others in God’s name, with hope for a return visit. Mary concluded, thanking everyone for their encouragement, prayers, and financial support, “I love our church!”

Next lunch is June 21, at The Galley  12:00 noon. The guest speaker will be Eileen Eichhorn sharing, “Gems From The Bible”. Come join us June 21, the

Pastor Joe, New Visitation Pastor

Life started for me in Ball Hospital, Muncie, 1940. My parents were devoted Christians with my father as a teacher/lay-ordained-elder in the Methodist Church and mother in the WSCS. My two older brothers were married by the time I was in Junior High School at Burris. I graduated from Burris H.S. in 1958 and from Ball State in 1964. I worked at Epworth Forest from 1961-1966 as property man during the summer programs and on the grounds crew preparing for retreat groups year around.

I married Rebecca Chance in the old auditorium at Epworth after which we lived in Washington, D.C. for 3 years. We then moved back to Indiana where our three children were born (now Margaret Imhof, Timothy Andrews, and Elaine Remole).

I’ve served churches for 40+ years in Indiana and then retired in 2008. In the meantime I served as chaplain at St. Joseph Hospital for 27 years. I then met and married Anna 10 years ago and we celebrate 15 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren now.

We enjoy semi-retirement, music, photography and our families. I’m now enjoying meeting the people of First United Methodist Church, Decatur.
Available Dates for Decatur Heights
The cost is $550 for the week and the following weeks are available:
July 9-15
July 30-August 5
August 6-12
August 13-19
August 20-26
August 27-September 2

DRIVERS NEEDED:
Golden Meadows and others in our community have requested rides to church on Sunday mornings. We are currently picking up 3 persons from Golden Meadows and a few people from the Wednesday night meal. We pick them up at 9 am and take them back after the 10 am service is finished. So far, Mike & Carol Pettibone have volunteered to pick up the first Sunday of each month. Steve & Mary Pilkington the second Sunday of the month. Phylis Ulman the third Sunday of the month. Scott & Shelley Porter have helped. We are looking for any help possible. You may commit to a set Sunday per month or any way this outreach fits your schedule. You would let Janet in the office know your availability and she will mail reminder cards with phone numbers and instructions. All our drivers are currently using their own cars.

June Birthdays
6/02 Caleb Boyd
6/02 Taylor Knaub (14)
6/04 Cleo Burgin
6/04 Vernon Clark
6/04 Chase Witte (8)
6/04 Seth Witte (8)
6/06 Mark Stahl
6/07 Doug Hinsky
6/07 Charlie Frey
6/07 Jarred Stuckey
6/09 Bobbie Arnold
6/09 Deb Heyerly
6/10 Becky Baumer
6/10 Amy Gutierrez
6/12 Rod Hawkins
6/12 Julie Pettibone
6/13 Jeni Covington

June Anniversaries
6/01 Vic & Kris Porter
6/02 Jeremy & Jessica Jones
6/02 Hank & Coni Mayer
6/04 Rich & Nancy Collier
6/05 Jeff & Janice Reynolds
6/06 Charlie & Jean Brune
6/08 Charlie & Cloe Frey
6/09 Bryce & Esther Miller
6/09 Ryan & Sarah Wolfe
6/13 Juan & Amy Gutierrez
6/14 Brian & Megan Jewell
6/14 Jordan & Brittaney Smith
6/16 Jim & Cindy Heimann
6/16 Ivan & Sandy Howe
6/16 Rob & Julie Pettibone
6/18 Loren & Janine Felabom
6/21 Mike & Carol Pettibone
6/25 Ryan & Melissa Dotson
6/28 Clint & Brandy Knaub
6/29 Tom & Dusty Gase
6/30 Bob & Bev Stuck
Yep, you, we could use your help. This summer, we’re combining learning about the Bible with building intergenerational relationships! It’s called “The Church’s Got Talent.” This fun, faith-based, friendship-building program invites adults in the congregation to share with children their hobbies, talents or collections. By sharing about yourself and inviting children into your lives through your hobby and talent, you get to form important, life-giving, faith-building relationships just like Jesus!

***Examples might include cooking/baking, boating, music, art, gardening, crafting, farming/livestock, golfing, acting/storytelling, scrapbooking, woodworking, sewing, knitting, science, board/card games, hiking, fishing....***

Each week adults will:

- share a little about themselves
- tell kids about their hobby, talent or collection
- share a story, examples, or demonstration
- read a Scripture verse or Bible story related to their hobby or talent & lead a related activity with children along with the Children’s Ministry Director’s help

“The Church’s Got Talent” will take place in Jr. Church during 10am Worship.

We’ll begin June 4th and continue throughout the summer.

Ready to Sign-up or want more info? Contact Annette—(260) 223-2288 or gowercrew@gmail.com

The fine print...Serving in children’s ministry is subject to Safe Sanctuary Policies including 6 months in attendance guideline, background check and approval by Director of Children’s Ministries.

Pizza & Props is coming! Starting June 25th and continuing all through July right after 10am Worship. We’ll meet in the Family Life Center to enjoy a pizza lunch, fellowship, and create VBS props. All ages welcome!!!

Sunday, July 30th—Thursday, August 3rd with family dinner at 5:20pm and kids’ Hero Central from 6-8pm.
Family Fun Night will be Friday, August 4th from 5:30-7:30pm.
The Hope Chest
The Little Shop with a Big Heart

The Hope Chest would like to thank everyone for your support with our Annual Prom Dress event. The donations we received from the community made it possible for us to give away 100 dresses to teenage girls from area schools to enjoy their prom.

We will celebrate Father’s Day June 16th. Stop in for snacks, coffee and a special sale.

Thanks again for your continued support with all our projects.
The Hope Chest Staff
Tana’s Colorful Words

It’s How You Say It

Why is it, when talking with adults we sometimes choose our words carefully in order to foster good communication and understanding? Yet its possible when talking to children we forget to choose our words wisely? Which example A or B would be your choice for a positive response?

A. “Do you understand what I told you to do!”
B. “Is there anything I can repeat to help you get your job done?”

Very young children are still learning how to understand and communicate with people in their world. Introducing new words to extend their vocabulary is a good thing, when used properly. Chosen positive words (magnificent, wonderful, good, great, awesome) encourage good listening and a positive attitude. Avoid baby talk, cuteesy, nonsense words, yet using a sing-song voice can boost language development.

You might remember this childhood song:

Oh Be Careful...
Oh be careful little ears what you hear.
Oh be careful little mouth what you say.
For the Father up above is looking down on us.
Oh be careful little mouth what you say.

Until the come out again!

That’s A Fact

Each Day Passes

It’s up to us to choose how we spend our time, energy, and efforts that can invest into something that truly matters!

The noises, distractions, and busyness of this world can make it difficult to recognize the quiet messages from God. It’s the simple and little things that can help us all find God sightings.

No Charge
I love the smell of flowers,
when they bloom in the spring!
I love the sound a chorus makes,
when they begin to sing.
I love the taste of water,
from a clear, cold mountain stream.
I love a peaceful sleep,
filled with pleasant dreams.
I love my little puppy dog
and I know that he loves me.
I love the fact, that all these things,
are absolutely free!

Rick Peoples

We all as God’s children need to block out the noise, use our eyes and ears to listen as we enjoy children, life, and those little things that are free for you and me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Pentecost  
  8:15 & 10 am-Worship  
  11:15-Discipleship Groups  
  5-7 pm-Youth  
  Graduation Sunday |       | 6:30 pm-Staff Meeting  
  7 pm-A.A. | 5:6 pm-Community Meal  
  6:30 pm-A Better Life - -  
  Briana's Hope | Pastor Amy out of office  
  June 8-10-Annual Conference |       | 6 pm-West-Ellenberger Wedding Rehearsal  
  3 pm-West-Ellenberger Wedding |
| 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  |
| 8:15 & 10 am-Worship  
  11:15-Discipleship Groups  
  5-7 pm-Youth |       | 7 pm-Discipleship Team  
  7 pm-A.A. | 5:6 pm-Community Meal  
  6:30-A Better Life - -  
  Briana's Hope |       |       |       |
| 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  |
| Father's Day  
  8:15 & 10 am-Worship  
  11:15-Discipleship Groups  
  5-7 pm-Youth  
  Newsletter Deadline |       | 6 pm-Finance Committee  
  7 pm-Ad Council  
  7 pm-A.A. | 12 pm-Wisdom People at The Galley  
  5-6 pm-Community Meal  
  6:30 pm-A Better Life - -  
  Briana's Hope |       |       |       |
| 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |       |
| 8:15 & 10 am-Worship  
  11:15-Discipleship Groups  
  5 pm-Table Talk @ Java Bean  
  5-7 pm-Youth |       | 7 pm-Discipleship Team  
  7 pm-A.A. | 5:6 pm-Community Meal  
  6:30 pm-A Better Life - -  
  Briana's Hope |       |       |       |
Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Connect - Grow - Serve.

June 4

Celebrate Pentecost Sunday

&

Graduation Day!

June 18

Father's Day