



Church Spotlight

Philadelphia UMC, Rock Hill District

Reverend Becky Shirley, Pastor

“Encouraging Healthier Living”

When Reverend Becky Shirley, pastor of Philadelphia UMC in Rock Hill, first introduced the FAN Program to her congregation, little did she know how quickly church members would step up and get involved! After learning about FAN at a UMC District meeting, Rev. Shirley believed FAN would encourage her congregation to learn more about why taking care of their physical health is an important aspect of our faith. Rev. Shirley quickly met with her church council members and received support to get FAN started at Philadelphia UMC.

Before participating in FAN, few opportunities existed for members to do physical activity and eat healthy. Thanks to the collective efforts of the FAN committee, led by FAN Coordinator Ms. Kristin Gommer, several church events now focus on increasing physical activity and healthy eating. For example, Ms. Gommer leads a monthly prayer walk through the neighborhood near the church. Open to members of the community, the walk begins with a devotion and time of prayer before participants begin walking. Another program, *Sole Mates*, has helped church members increase their physical activity. *Sole Mates* includes church members of all ages who started meeting once a week to train for a local 5K. Their first 5K was the Rock Hill Pumpkin Run 5K supporting homeless individuals and families in their community. They are looking forward to their next event!



In addition to the 5Ks and the prayer walks, the FAN committee strives to work opportunities and messages into regularly scheduled church activities. Rev. Shirley shared that when people have so many activities going on in their lives, she encourages them to consider, “*what are the events that are easiest to tap into?*” For example, in order to teach members about healthy eating, a bulletin board is updated regularly with tips and information. In addition, a Hoola Hoop exercise station and samples of healthy snacks and recipes were incorporated into the church’s annual Fall Festival rather than trying to plan a separate health fair type event.



Rev. Shirley shared that the FAN Committee’s goal has been to remind members “*God cares about our physical health and we need to be healthy in order to be His hands and feet to serve others.*” She also praised the positive support of her FAN Committee to “*meet, pray, and plan together.*” Lastly, she expressed appreciation and gratitude for Bishop Holston and his call for healthier living and looks forward to more exciting opportunities for healthy living!

Congratulations to Philadelphia UMC for your success and commitment to the health and well-being of your members and community!