



Church Spotlight

North Orangeburg UMC, Orangeburg District

Reverend Dwight Nelson, Pastor

“If You’re Not Healthy or Well, Then You Can’t Serve God to Your Fullest”

The theme of the FAN Committee at North Orangeburg is “If You’re Not Healthy or Well, Then You Can’t Serve God to Your Fullest.” Before FAN, the health and welfare committee, led by Ms. Lecia Bonaparte, had already been focused on helping lower the number of church members with diabetes and heart disease. When she learned about FAN and how it promotes similar goals and connects the importance of health to faith, she was ready to be involved and serve as the FAN Coordinator.

One of the unique and exciting ways FAN is shared at North Orangeburg UMC is by giving the “FAN Member of the Month” award. This award is given to a church member who models the 3 areas of FAN – Faith, Activity, and Nutrition. For example, a previous award winner had been on a transplant list for a kidney. He began to eat healthier, and after a recent check-up, learned that the kidney transplant is now on hold! Stories like these have inspired and motivated church members to see that even small changes can make a big difference.



North Orangeburg UMC is taking other steps to improve members’ health. For example, they created a guideline that church meetings or functions serving food should have fruit or vegetable choices. Ms. Bonaparte shared that at first members did not want to serve the healthier choices because they were concerned there would be too many leftovers. However, they have been pleasantly surprised to see other church members enjoy eating the healthier choices. They have also started a walking program that meets 3 times per week. Their pastor, Rev. Nelson, encourages church members to get a pedometer and keep track of their steps. Some members send their weekly steps to the committee. The committee posts weekly step counts on the bulletin board to motivate others to get involved.

The FAN Committee meets once a month to discuss award nominees and plan FAN activities. Ms. Bonaparte suggests making small changes and being consistent because change can be difficult. However, by starting small, being consistent, and building over time, she believes the smaller successes will lead to bigger successes. The committee hopes their consistency shows church members FAN is not just here for the short-term, but is here to stay for the long-term.



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