



# Church Spotlight

## Wesley UMC, Columbia District

Reverend Tiffany Knowlin, Pastor

### Making Changes One Step at a Time!

During the fall of 2015, Wesley UMC's sanctuary in downtown Columbia experienced structural damage caused by flooding. As a result, the congregation was unable to host regular services and activities. During this time, neighboring Main Street UMC extended an offer of hospitality to Wesley to use their facilities. Finally, in September 2018, Wesley moved back into its renovated facilities, just in time to celebrate 150 years of ministry!

Rev. Tiffany Knowlin attended a UMC Columbia District meeting and heard about the FAN Program. At the time, Ms. Patricia Armstrong served as the leader of the health committee at the church. When Rev. Knowlin shared the program with Ms. Armstrong, she eagerly stepped into the leadership role to serve as the FAN Coordinator. The FAN committee, including Ms. Laverne Irving, Ms. Eddie Morgan, Ms. Freda Armstrong, Ms. Lucy Ingram, and Mr. Doug Marcum, shared FAN with the rest of the church, and they were excited to see members' curiosity for potential changes around the church.

Ms. Armstrong believes providing opportunities for healthy choices in the church setting is a great way to help people realize it is not too late to make decisions to improve their health. So far, one of the major FAN successes has been having more healthy options available at events and activities that serve food. Ms. Armstrong attributes the success of FAN menu makeovers to slowly adding healthier options (e.g., baked chicken, vegetable dishes) and adjusting portion sizes instead of removing traditional dishes (e.g., fried chicken) or removing all the unhealthy items all at once.



Ms. Armstrong admits that not being in their usual place of worship made planning FAN activities and programs challenging. However, the committee consistently got the message out about FAN by sharing the monthly bulletin inserts, creating announcement slides for events, and sharing updates during Sunday School classes. The committee hopes these messages help members make healthy living a part of everyday life.



Lately, more young families have started to attend services. Moving forward, Ms. Armstrong and the committee hope to get members of all ages involved. They also look forward to organizing a quarterly event for church members to come together and be more physically active. For churches looking to start FAN or those who have seen a decrease in excitement since the program began, Ms. Armstrong says, "Remember, changes do not happen overnight!" She recommends taking time to celebrate achievements, to stay positive, and to take steps to introduce new changes.

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