

Is Urbandale United Church of Christ a Healthy Church System? An Evaluation Checklist Based on Eight Systems

Are we as a church healthy? You may use this checklist to evaluate where you think we are in regards to these eight areas of a healthy church system. You may have different criteria – and that would make interesting dialogue. The shaded area on the left, “The Relationship Factor,” is meant to be overlaid on all the other systems. Maryellen Knowles

<i>The Relationship Factor</i>	AREA*	CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH SYSTEM**
<p><i>__ We create an atmosphere for safe, effective, open dialogue</i></p> <p><i>__ We offer a supportive community and active ministry to each other in a healthy manner</i></p> <p><i>__ We practice a loving, non-anxious presence in our relationships with each other</i></p> <p><i>__ We recognize and resolve conflicts within the context of healthy system teachings</i></p> <p><i>__ We practice inclusiveness and equality in order to welcome all people</i></p> <p><i>__ We laugh together</i></p> <p><i>__ We invite full participation as a community of pilgrims</i></p>	<p>1. The Weekend Service System:</p>	<p><i>__ There is an inclusive process for planning the church services and educational offerings</i></p> <p><i>__ Worship Services are inspiring, fulfilling, creative; there is a sense of energy</i></p> <p><i>__ Educational offerings are available, appropriate and of vital interest for all ages</i></p> <p><i>__ There is a team approach to implementing the church services; volunteers are plentiful and responsible</i></p> <p><i>__ There is a process for evaluating church services and determining changes and/or additional services</i></p> <p><i>__ Recommended changes are incorporated into the planning process</i></p> <p><i>__ Planning, implementing and evaluation of the services is cyclical</i></p>
	<p>2. The Outreach System</p>	<p><i>__ Our church’s mission and ministry is visible in the community</i></p> <p><i>__ There is an effective plan for attracting people to our church</i></p> <p><i>__ There is a process for welcoming visitors</i></p> <p><i>__ Visitors are extravagantly welcomed by the congregation</i></p> <p><i>__ There is an effective plan for visitor follow-up</i></p> <p><i>__ Visitors return, are remembered and warmly greeted by multiple members</i></p> <p><i>__ Attendance is growing by all ages</i></p>
	<p>3. The Assimilation and Belonging System:</p>	<p><i>__ Visitors choose to become members</i></p> <p><i>__ New members attend comprehensive classes before belong</i></p> <p><i>__ There is an effective plan for integrating and assimilating new members</i></p> <p><i>__ There are sufficient places for members to” land and belong”</i></p> <p><i>__ New members are assimilated in service, stewardship and shared talent</i></p> <p><i>__ Youth are invited and integrated into all aspects in the life of the church</i></p> <p><i>__ There is sufficient, responsible, broad-based volunteers so over 50% of our congregation is involved</i></p>

<p> <input type="checkbox"/> We create an atmosphere for safe, effective, open dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> We offer a supportive community and active ministry to each other in a healthy manner <input type="checkbox"/> We practice a loving, non-anxious presence in our relationships with each other <input type="checkbox"/> We recognize and resolve conflicts within the context of healthy system teachings <input type="checkbox"/> We practice inclusiveness and equality in order to welcome all people <input type="checkbox"/> We laugh together <input type="checkbox"/> We invite full participation as a community of pilgrims </p>	<p>4. The Small Groups System:</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> There is an understanding of the importance of small groups in building community <input type="checkbox"/> There is a variety of active, vital small groups that are of interest to members <input type="checkbox"/> There is a plan for creating, re-creating and reproducing small groups. <input type="checkbox"/> A majority of church members participate in a small group <input type="checkbox"/> New members are assimilated in a small group in a timely manner </p>
	<p>5. The Stewardship System:</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a plan on how to develop extravagant givers at our church <input type="checkbox"/> There is an attitude of financial generosity based on a vision for ministry and programs <input type="checkbox"/> The congregation is aware of how the vision is connected to the level of giving <input type="checkbox"/> The members include the wider mission of the community and church in their giving </p>
	<p>6. The Leadership System:</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership seeks divine guidance in the work of the church <input type="checkbox"/> Teams are active, empowered and energized <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership is shared rather than dominated by a few people <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership is dedicated to evaluation and goal setting of the #7, Strategic System <input type="checkbox"/> Teams feel empowered and there is shared leadership </p>
	<p>7. The Strategic System:</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a conscious awareness and attention to the various systems within a church <input type="checkbox"/> There is an evaluation system in place for programs <input type="checkbox"/> There is an evaluation system in place for personnel <input type="checkbox"/> The evaluation process is cyclical in nature and used in goal setting in System 6, The Leadership System </p>
	<p>8. The Mission/Vision System:</p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a planned, inclusive process for determining the direction of our church. <input type="checkbox"/> The congregation owns the vision and mission <input type="checkbox"/> The church's vision, mission and congregants support youth's spiritual development <input type="checkbox"/> People are growing in community as evidenced by attendance, participation, service and stewardship <input type="checkbox"/> Optimal care and ministering to one other is provided <input type="checkbox"/> Acts of charity and advocacy are practiced to promote and create a just society </p>
	<p> * These eight areas were designed by Nelson Searcy in an on-line workshop, http://www.churchleaderinsights.com/blog/ </p>	<p> **The check list is tailored towards our congregation from my perspective. It was created from our UCC Discernment Statement, various on-line articles on healthy church systems and my own thinking. If anyone is interested in reading more about this topic I can give a list of references. </p>