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September 18, 2015

Dear member of Trinity United Methodist Church,

Every so often individual churches need to update their membership records. In looking at our current records, though many are still active, it has become apparent that we have many on the rolls who no longer participate actively in the life of Trinity United Methodist Church. So, with the enclosed postcard, we are asking *everyone* receiving this letter to please respond as to your desire for membership at this time. *Before you respond with the enclosed postcard, however, let us all be reminded of what membership in a local United Methodist Church actually means.* As people join the local church today, these are the promises made before God and congregation (from the *United Methodist Book of Discipline* or BOD): **To be loyal to Christ through The United Methodist Church and do all in their power to strengthen its ministries (§217.5, BOD) ... and to faithfully participate in its ministries by (§217.6, BOD)...**

- **Their prayers** – daily prayers for your local congregation, your pastor, as well as the United Methodist Church in general. We need your prayers! This is one of the actions of those who commit to membership in the local church.
- **Their presence** – a commitment to regular attendance in our weekly worship celebration (currently Sunday, 9 AM). It is very difficult to be ‘the Body of Christ’ if the whole body is not present. Worship is the regular place we come together to lift up the object of our faith—Jesus Christ, as well as intentionally coming together to hear God’s word and grow in our faith. At Trinity UMC, in order to be able to measure this commitment, we would like everyone to set an attendance goal of at least 50% in order to be considered an ‘active’ member.
- **Their gifts** – our giving to God through our offerings of tithes and gifts. Tithes are the first 10% of what God blesses you with each week, and gifts would be those special gifts given over and above our tithes. The tithes are what fund the ministry of the local church, allowing your church to be about the ministries God calls us to. Every member, if not tithing, should be working on improving their giving to the ultimate goal of tithing.
- **Their service** – the giving of our time (a vital part of our stewardship—our giving back to God). If every member would commit to the giving of 1 hour of time per week in service to their local church, we would have every job covered and then some! This would spread out the energy spent in ministry and safeguard us from volunteer burnout (a current reality in many churches).
- **Their witness** – the living out of our Christian faith, as disciples of Jesus Christ, wherever we are. Our responsibility as members of a local church is also to provide a credible witness to who we follow, reflecting to the rest of the world Jesus’ values and lifestyle on a daily basis.

After reviewing these commitments made by all members of local United Methodist Churches, we need you to fill out the enclosed postcard as follows:

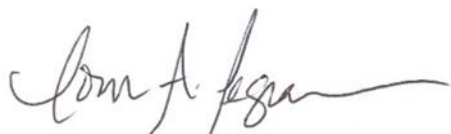
- Check 'Yes' to being a member, if you are currently committed to the expectations of membership as listed above, or
- Check 'No, please move me to the Friends List' if you are not currently committed to the expectations of membership as listed above. (The 'Friends List' is an unofficial list of those who wish to stay on our mailing list, who might need basic services offered through the local church on occasion, but without the added responsibility of membership.) Or...
- Check 'I would like someone to contact me about membership. The best number to reach me at would be _____' if you desire a conversation about membership. Or a final option would be...
- Check 'I no longer wish to be connected with the Trinity UMC at this time.'

If you would check the appropriate box, after reviewing the expectations and praying about where you currently fit in, it would be much appreciated. Again, a response is needed from *everyone* who receives this letter.

Also, we do understand that some currently cannot fulfill membership expectations due to age, illness, or other circumstances (i.e. homebound). If this is your situation and you are already a member, please do check the 'Yes' box on the postcard before mailing this back into us.

Thank you so much for helping us to keep our membership role healthy, as well as updating our records for future use. If we do not hear back from you by October 15, someone from Trinity UMC will contact you to check into your membership status. Again, thank you so much for helping us keep our records current.

Thank you and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rom A. Pegram". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Rom A. Pegram
Pastor