

September 15, 2020

To whom it may concern:

As a recently retired Pastor of 42 years, I often look back over the years of joy and promise from having served in 5 congregations. There were challenges, to be sure. However, they served to undergird my faith and to bring me closer to God and to the People of God. The joys and positives of full time congregational ministry far outweighed any hurdles and barriers along the way.

One of those enriching and fulfilling times was when one of my parishes intentionally yoked in a partnership with **Connections Stewardship Group**.

Connections Stewardship Group's on-site facilitator was Pastor John Cross. **Connections** was called in by the church council to provide an assessment of our total ministry: programs, people and facilities. Individual and family groupings were privately interviewed. Participants were asked how they saw current ministries. One-hour sessions allowed parishioners to confidentially vent, discuss, ask questions, and provide ideas for future ministries, as well as how to bolster and support current ones. Pastor Cross met with small groups: choir, Sunday School, Bible Study groups, etc. He preached on two Sundays and was pretty much available 24/7 for questions and inquiries.

The sharing of the information that John gathered was an eye opener for all members and boosted the people by calling them to task in areas that needed improvement. This thorough and hands-on process pointed out exciting ways that new ministries would enhance the total outreach of our church to the neighboring community.

To this day, members and Pastor speak well of **Connections** and would strongly recommend this ministry. Give John a call – you will not regret it!

Mark Crispell

Rev. Mark S. Crispell
Retired