



# Quick Guide for Local Churches

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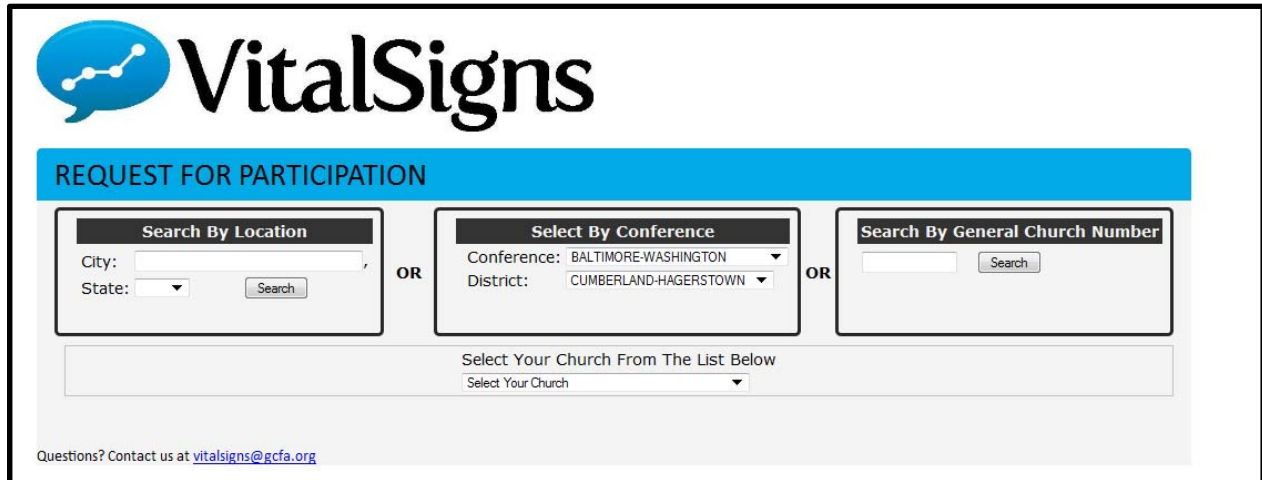
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## Request to Participate

The first thing a church will do is sign up for the VitalSigns dashboard. This is an easy and quick process.

1. Log on to <http://vitalsigns.gcfa.org>



The screenshot shows the VitalSigns website interface for requesting participation. At the top left is the VitalSigns logo. Below it is a blue header with the text 'REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION'. The main content area contains three search options: 'Search By Location' with fields for City and State and a Search button; 'Select By Conference' with dropdown menus for Conference (set to BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON) and District (set to CUMBERLAND-HAGERSTOWN) and a Search button; and 'Search By General Church Number' with a text input field and a Search button. Below these options is a section titled 'Select Your Church From The List Below' with a dropdown menu labeled 'Select Your Church'. At the bottom left, there is a link for questions: 'Questions? Contact us at [vitalsigns@gcfa.org](mailto:vitalsigns@gcfa.org)'.

2. You can find your church through searching by location, selecting your conference or district, or entering your General Church number (a six digit code that you may or may not know).
3. Under the 'Select by Conference' dropdown *select* the conference
4. Under 'District' dropdown *select* the district
  - a. When the district has been chosen, the selection for 'church' will appear.
5. *Choose* the applicable church
  - a. Once the church has been chosen, a box will appear with the church information.
  - b. *Complete* the information requested and *click* on 'Send Request'.

To request a weekly link please provide us with your name email and phone number and the email address where the link should be sent and click "Request" below. You only be contacted if there a question with your request.

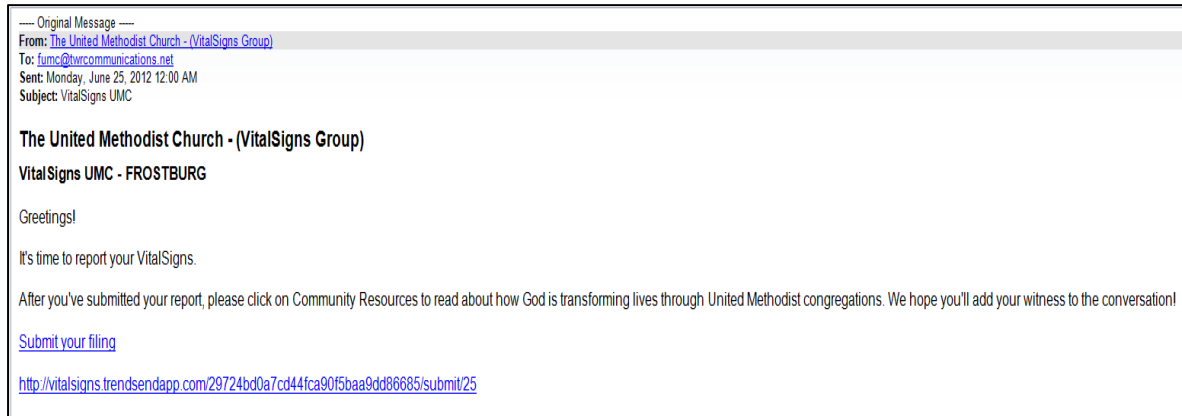
Your Information:     
Name Email Phone

Email address where weekly link should be sent:

## VitalSigns Reminder Emails

A VitalSigns email is sent out every Sunday as a reminder to report data. The reporting period begins on the previous Monday through Sunday. i.e., if the email is received on July 8, 2012 the reporting period is for July 2 – 8. The email will contain the link to the 'My filing page' for the church.

- Click on the 'Submit your filing' link from within the email message. (example of email is below)
- There is no log-in, user name or password required to enter the VitalSigns website.

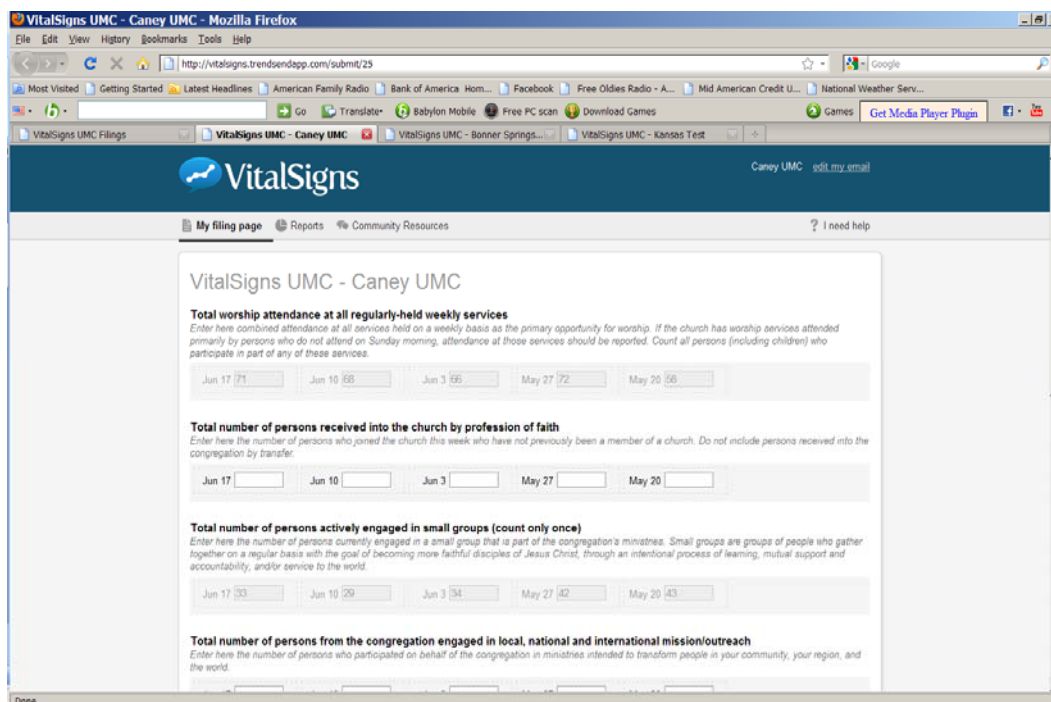


## VitalSigns Website

When the website launches, 5 weeks will be displayed. Data can be entered/edited for any of the fields visible. Five weeks will always be visible on this screen, moving the oldest data off the screen each week.

## Entering Data

- Enter the data in the designated field for each question. (Keep in mind the number can be zero) A field may be left blank if the answer is unknown.



- Use the 'Filing Comments' text boxes to record factors that might have influenced the numbers entered. i.e., *Attendance for this Sunday was up because it was Confirmation Sunday.* (see below)

**Share stories about your church on the next page.**

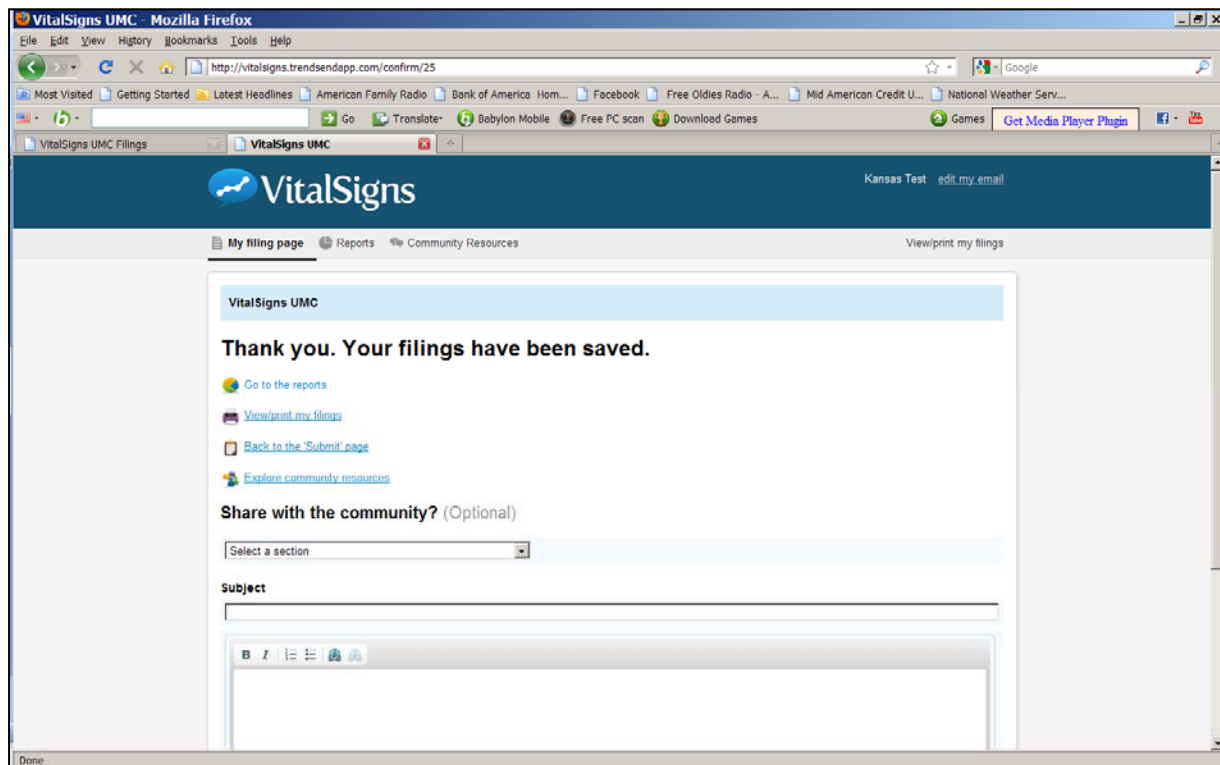
We'd love to hear how your congregation has experienced God's presence in the past week and what practices are [working](#) for your church. Please tell those stories on the next page after you have reported your numbers. Please use the Filing Comments field below to record any factors that influenced your numbers this week (snow storm, homecoming week, confirmation, church retreat, etc).

**Filing comments** (optional)

Jun 24	<input type="text"/>	Jun 17	<input type="text"/>	Jun 10	<input type="text"/>
Jun 3	<input type="text"/>	May 27	<input type="text"/>		

**Submit My Filings**

- When data entry is complete, *click* 'Submit My Filings'. An acknowledgment of receipt of data will be displayed as below.



- If you need to make a change, *click* on the 'Back to the Submit Page' link. Otherwise just close the window to exit – there is no logout required.
- If you go back to change numbers, remember to click 'Submit My Filings' again to commit your changes.

Once data has been entered and submitted, the fields appear 'grayed out', but once the cursor is positioned in the field, it becomes obvious the data can be changed.

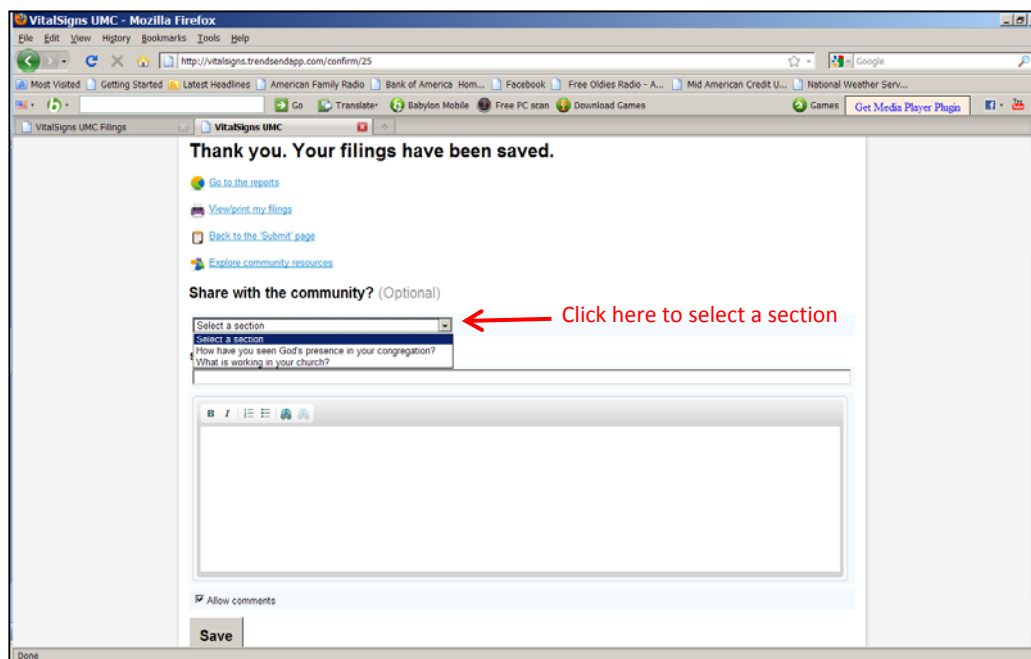
**NOTE:** If corrections need to be made on weeks not displayed, someone with administrative privileges at the district/conference level must make these changes or send an email to [VitalSigns@gcfa.org](mailto:VitalSigns@gcfa.org)

## Share stories about your church

On the 'thank you' screen, there is an opportunity so share stories with other churches. Something special or unexpected might have happened within your church or community during the week, or you might have tried something new and it was a great success so you decide to share.

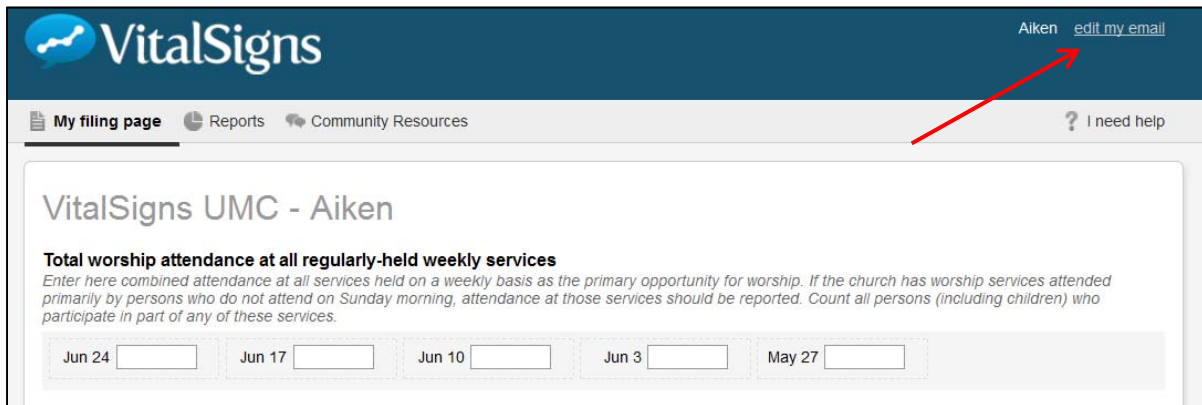
You can share these stories and others by selecting a topic available on the drop menu under 'Share with the Community'? (Also see Community Resources section on page 8 of this document)

- Click on the down arrow next to 'Select a Section'
- Enter a **Subject** and type your story in the text box
- When you are satisfied with your entry, click 'Save'



## How to change the email address

There many reasons email addresses change and it is important to remember to make the change within VitalSigns when this happens. The ability to change the email address used by the church is on the 'My filing page'.



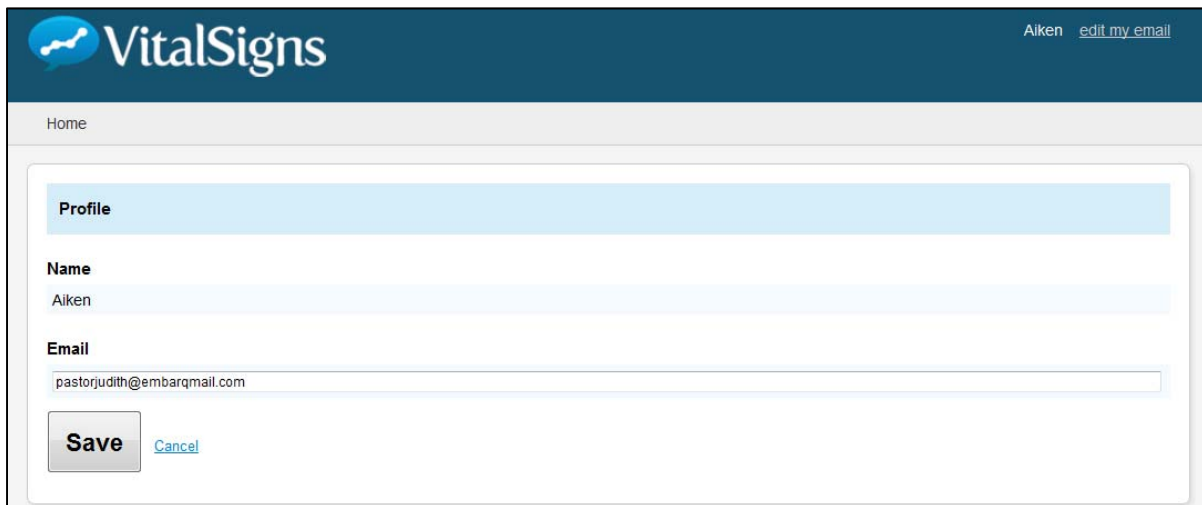
VitalSigns UMC - Aiken

**Total worship attendance at all regularly-held weekly services**  
*Enter here combined attendance at all services held on a weekly basis as the primary opportunity for worship. If the church has worship services attended primarily by persons who do not attend on Sunday morning, attendance at those services should be reported. Count all persons (including children) who participate in part of any of these services.*

Jun 24  Jun 17  Jun 10  Jun 3  May 27

Click on the 'edit my email' link and the below screen will appear.

- Update the email address and click Save.



VitalSigns UMC - Aiken

Home

**Profile**

**Name**  
Aiken

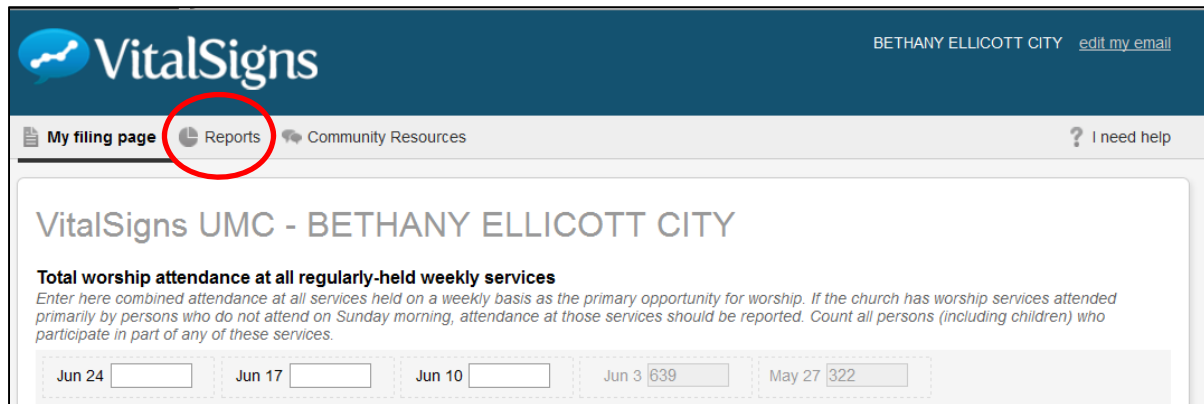
**Email**  
pastorjudith@embarqmail.com

**Save** [Cancel](#)

## Viewing Reports

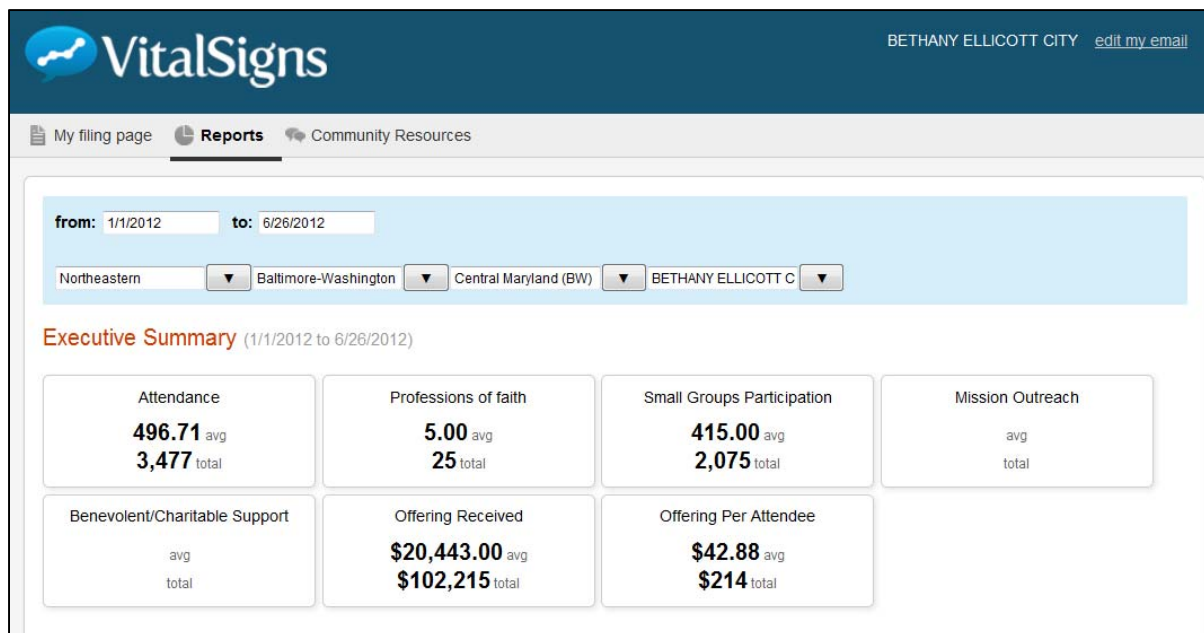
Once the data has been submitted for the church, the ability to view various reports is available from the 'My filing page'.

- Click on 'Reports' to view stats by **Summary** or **Breakdown**.



The screenshot shows the VitalSigns website interface. At the top, the logo 'VitalSigns' is on the left, and 'BETHANY ELLICOTT CITY' with a link 'edit my email' is on the right. Below the logo, there is a navigation bar with three items: 'My filing page', 'Reports' (which is circled in red), and 'Community Resources'. To the right of the navigation bar is a help icon and the text '? I need help'. Below the navigation bar, the main content area displays 'VitalSigns UMC - BETHANY ELLICOTT CITY'. Underneath, there is a heading 'Total worship attendance at all regularly-held weekly services' followed by a paragraph of instructions: 'Enter here combined attendance at all services held on a weekly basis as the primary opportunity for worship. If the church has worship services attended primarily by persons who do not attend on Sunday morning, attendance at those services should be reported. Count all persons (including children) who participate in part of any of these services.' At the bottom of this section, there are several date selection boxes: 'Jun 24', 'Jun 17', 'Jun 10', 'Jun 3' (with the value '639'), and 'May 27' (with the value '322').

- You'll be redirected to the reports page where there are several viewing options.



The screenshot shows the VitalSigns website interface, specifically the 'Reports' page. At the top, the logo 'VitalSigns' is on the left, and 'BETHANY ELLICOTT CITY' with a link 'edit my email' is on the right. Below the logo, there is a navigation bar with three items: 'My filing page', 'Reports' (which is highlighted), and 'Community Resources'. Below the navigation bar, there is a date range selector: 'from: 1/1/2012 to: 6/26/2012'. Below the date range selector, there are four dropdown menus for location selection: 'Northeastern', 'Baltimore-Washington', 'Central Maryland (BW)', and 'BETHANY ELLICOTT C'. Below the location selection, there is a heading 'Executive Summary (1/1/2012 to 6/26/2012)'. Below the heading, there is a table with six columns and two rows of data.

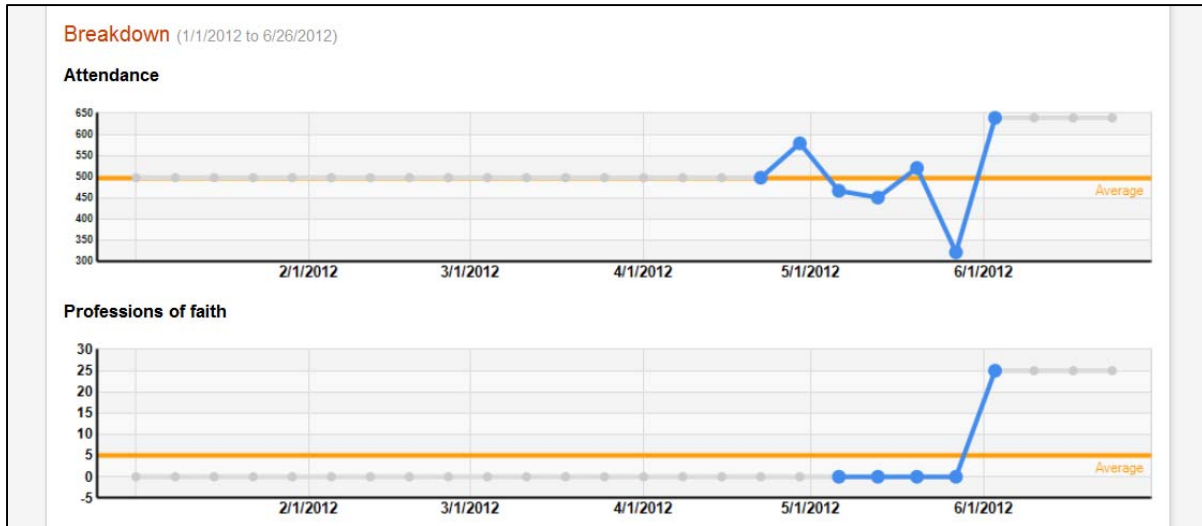
Attendance	Professions of faith	Small Groups Participation	Mission Outreach	Benevolent/Charitable Support	Offering Received
496.71 avg 3,477 total	5.00 avg 25 total	415.00 avg 2,075 total	avg total	avg total	\$20,443.00 avg \$102,215 total

Below the table, there is a column for 'Offering Per Attendee' with the following data: \$42.88 avg, \$214 total.

- Click on the down arrows to choose the jurisdiction, conference, district and church.
  - It is always interesting to see how your local church is doing compared to other churches in the district or conference overall



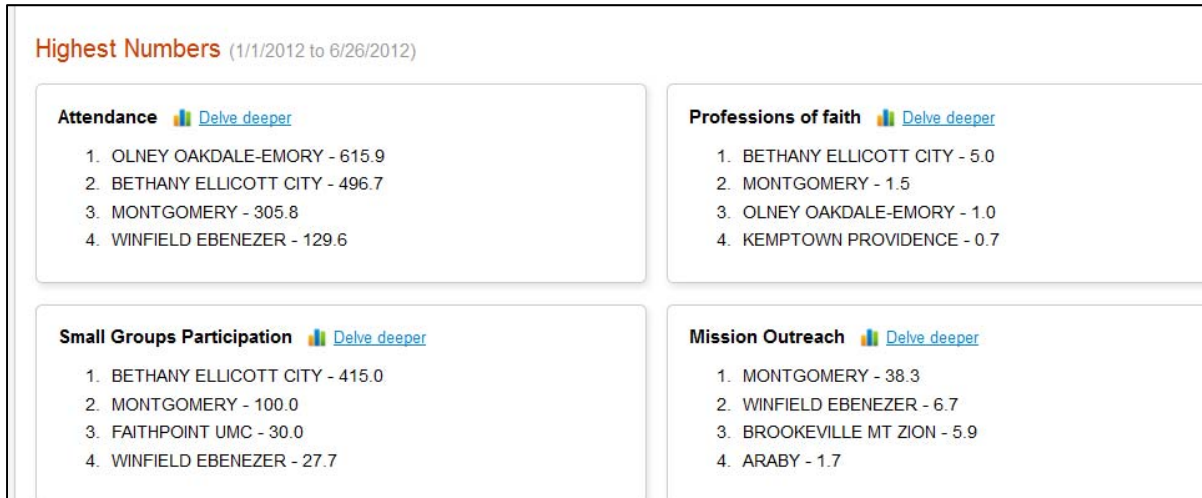
- If you want to change the date range, click anywhere in the date field box and the calendar will appear.
- An example of the charts is below



You have the ability to drill down to see more detail.

**NOTE:** If you have selected your church for the report you will only see your church information when you drill down and this is probably not going to be very helpful.

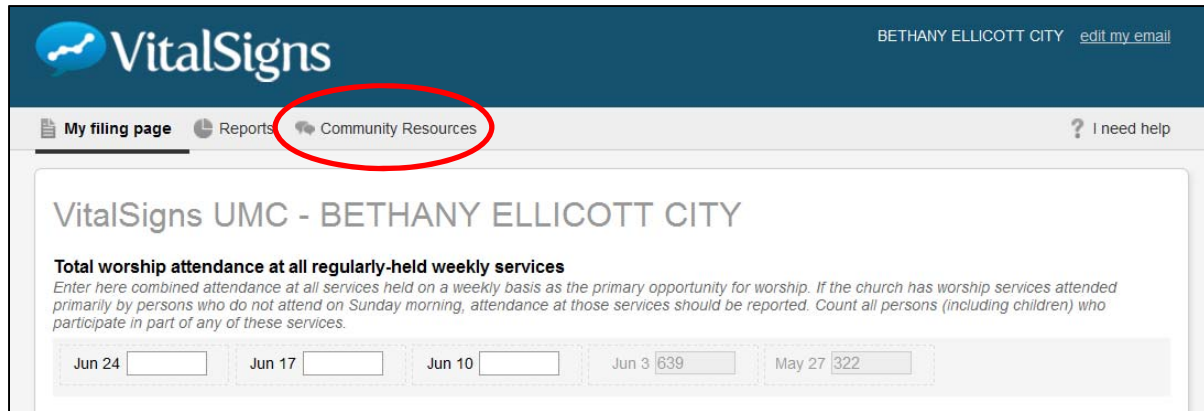
- Click on the 'Delve deeper' link by any question to see more detailed reporting.



## Community Resources

It is always good to learn what is happening within our denomination, and one way to do this is by visiting the 'community resources' page in VitalSigns. This is visible to everyone.

- Click on 'Community Resources' and you will be redirected to the page where you can read what others have shared
- You can write comments on existing postings and *save* the input



**VitalSigns** BETHANY ELLCOTT CITY [edit my email](#)

My filing page Reports **Community Resources** ? I need help

### VitalSigns UMC - BETHANY ELLCOTT CITY

**Total worship attendance at all regularly-held weekly services**  
*Enter here combined attendance at all services held on a weekly basis as the primary opportunity for worship. If the church has worship services attended primarily by persons who do not attend on Sunday morning, attendance at those services should be reported. Count all persons (including children) who participate in part of any of these services.*

Jun 24	<input type="text"/>	Jun 17	<input type="text"/>	Jun 10	<input type="text"/>	Jun 3	639	May 27	322
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## Exiting VitalSigns

Once you have entered and saved the data for your church, you can just close out of the program. There is no log out required.

## **VitalSigns Dashboard Questions**

### **1. Total worship attendance at all regularly-held weekly services**

Enter here combined attendance at all services held on a weekly basis as the primary opportunity for worship. If the church has worship services attended primarily by persons who do not attend on Sunday morning, attendance at those services should be reported. Count all persons (including children) who participate in part of any of these services.

### **2. Total number of persons received into the church by profession of faith**

Enter here the number of persons who joined the church this week who have not previously been a member of a church. Do not include persons received into the congregation by transfer.

### **3. Total number of persons actively engaged in small groups (count only once)**

Enter here the number of persons currently engaged in a small group that is part of the congregation's ministries. Small groups are groups of people who gather together on a regular basis with the goal of becoming more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, through an intentional process of learning, mutual support and accountability, and/or service to the world.

### **4. Total number of persons from the congregation engaged in local, national and international mission/outreach**

Enter here the number of persons sent out on behalf of the congregation for ministries intended to transform people in your community, your region, and the world.

### **5. The total amount given by local church to other organizations for support of benevolent and charitable ministries**

Enter here the amount of funds given by the church to support missions and ministries outside of the church. This includes giving to apportionments, Special Sundays, the Advance, and other United Methodist and non-United Methodist ministries engaged in work to transform the world.

### **6. Total offering received this week through pledges and offerings**

Enter here the total offerings and pledges received this week to support the ministries of the church. This includes offerings for the regular operating budget of the church, special offerings for particular ministries, capital campaigns, and other forms of designated giving. Do not include receipts from investments, fees for programs such as daycares or after school programs, or fundraisers.

- **Factors affecting your ministry in the last week. (Optional Narrative)**