

## Introduction

We, the VCI consultation team, thank Rev. Mark A. Miller, staff, lay leaders and the congregation of Tecumseh United Methodist Church for the invitation to consult with this Body of Christ. The following observations and prescriptions are the result of this consultation team's study of the following information: a) Tecumseh's self-study documents provided by its leaders, which includes the MissionInsite demographic report of the area population, the Mystery Guest report by Faith Perceptions, and worship videos, b) interview with the pastor, staff and ministry team leaders, c) input from the pre-consultation and consultation workshops. We are confident that God will use this report, to help Tecumseh United Methodist Church to more effectively be and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

## Strengths

1. Physical Plant - Building and Grounds: Tecumseh United Methodist Church has a great building and ample grounds for doing ministry. The well-maintained sanctuary, newly remodeled education wing, and sufficient parking indicate your readiness to welcome the people you reach for Jesus Christ. The mystery guest reports indicated an appreciation for adequate interior signage, sanctuary seating and an age appropriate area ready to receive children. Your building and grounds are poised for potential growth and expanded ministry opportunities!
2. A+ Hospitality: The evidence that you welcome others to worship is clear. Five of your six mystery guests reported feeling welcomed into your church. Further, the feeling of being welcomed extended from pre-service to post-service. All the mystery guests reported being invited to coffee hour. "I don't think I have ever been to one where they have gone out of their way to make us feel welcome." "The vibe of the church does serve to make guests feel welcome." Showing extravagant hospitality is taking the first step toward inviting others on a faith journey that will change their lives.
3. Committed Core of Lay Leadership: This congregation benefits from dedicated leaders with a variety of skills and passions who are open to exploring ways the congregation could reach and connect with people in your community. Despite congregational highs and lows, the lay leadership have remained committed to the ministry of Tecumseh UMC. Pastor Mark said, "I've been really impressed with these folks!" In the pre-consultation workshop, and in our interviews, we noted a genuine desire to grow the church.

## Concerns

1. Need for Renewed Spiritual Vitality: John Wesley considered the renewing of the heart as the orienting concern for Christianity. Apart from intentional spiritual formation along with a shared vision to drive the mission, the same people will be stuck doing the same things getting the same result. Time and time again we heard people express the need to get

more people mobilized for ministry. In our interviews we heard people say that visitors come, but rarely return. The worship video revealed a lack of attention to flow and focus. The music, though moving, is not able to overcome the starts and stops of the flow of the rest of the worship. The extended time of announcements, as well as the “joys and concerns” show an inner focus. Visitors are left wondering how they fit into the worship experience. Worship is your first and most important entry point into making disciples and time must be used wisely as you share the gospel with others.

2. Inwardly-Focused Mindset: When guests come to worship on Sunday mornings they are warmly welcomed. Now is the time to move your hospitality beyond your doors. In our interviews, your leadership expressed a desire to reach the unchurched in your neighborhood. Now is the time to create a way to intentionally develop personal relationships with the unchurched. We applaud your Outreach Team’s attempts to attract new persons. Now is the time for the whole church to join in a comprehensive plan for reaching out with the love of Christ. Your Trustees make great efforts to care for the facility. Now is the time to extend that ministry with additional exterior signage. Mystery Guests reported the website is up to date with information. However they remarked that your social media is a “bit busy and confusing” and expressed a need for “a narrative specifically for first-time guests”. Thom Rainer, President of Lifeway Christian Resources says that “the most common factor in declining churches is an inward-focus.” It is time for Tecumseh UMC to go “beyond the walls,” and become the hands, feet and voice of Jesus in this community!
3. Accountable Structure  
A cumbersome structure inhibits fruitfulness. Interviewees reported that there is no strategic planning, goal setting or method of evaluation. Without a strategic plan it is difficult to know if you are making progress. The consultation team found your administrative structure difficult to understand and stewardship practices promote a survival mentality instead of thriving in the blessings of God. When the structure and the budget both support and align with the mission and the vision, people can easily understand why the church exists and are excited about the possibilities to serve.

## **Prescriptions**

To address the above concerns, Tecumseh United Methodist Church will implement the following prescriptions.

**1. Renewed Spiritual Vitality** - The general rule of discipleship in the United Methodist Church is to witness to Jesus Christ in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the following process will provide a simple guide to help cultivate spiritual vitality.

A. Service of Spiritual Centering- The coach or her designee will lead a Service of Spiritual Centering to focus the congregation on God’s preferred future for Tecumseh UMC. This will take place on July 29, 2018.

B. Breakthrough Prayer – The pastor in consultation with the coach will identify a team of 3-5 people who will serve as a Prayer Team for Tecumseh UMC on or before July 15, 2018. This team will:

- Meet bi-weekly to read together and study *Ultimate Reliance: Breakthrough Prayer* by Sue Nelson Kibbey beginning immediately upon the formation of the team.
- Engage with Sue Nelson Kibbey's Breakthrough Prayer workshop. One option for this is through the REACH Leadership group on November 15<sup>th</sup> at Muskegon First UMC. Contact [cpoole@michiganumc.org](mailto:cpoole@michiganumc.org).
- Upon completion of the above, work in consultation with the coach to develop an on-going prayer ministry.

C. Core Values and Vision – We affirm the adopted mission of the UMC "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

- In order to live out this mission, the coach or her designee will facilitate a "Core Values" workshop with key leaders no later than August 30, 2018. The purpose is to clarify how God wants the congregation to uniquely live out its vision, accomplish its mission while identifying its key core values.
- The pastor in consultation with the coach will identify a task force of 3-4 people including the pastor, and at least one person under the age of 50 to complete the work of forming a clear and compelling vision statement. This work will be completed by October 15, 2018. The mission, vision and values will be affirmed by the Administrative Council by November 15, 2018.

D. Move worship from good to great – Great worship moves both the mind and the heart. The pastor in consultation with the coach will identify a worship planning team by October 1, 2018. This team will include the organist, handbell director, the pastor, one person from the witness committee, and two younger adults who are regular in worship attendance. This team will:

- Meet monthly beginning in October 2018 to discuss seasonal themes for worship. Communicate to the children's lesson leaders the theme and focus for each week. Special attention should be given to review of the Mystery Guest Report sections related to worship. Resources to jump start your work may be found at: [umdiscipleship.org/worship](http://umdiscipleship.org/worship) or [maryscifresministries.com](http://maryscifresministries.com)
- Video tape worship at least once a month beginning no later than November 1, 2018, and spend time reviewing and watching for gaps in the flow that interrupt the movement of worship between elements. Brainstorm together on ways to eliminate unnecessary distractions for worshippers. Learn to observe with the eyes of a first-time guest. Measure the time taken by each element of worship including announcements, prayer requests, children's lesson, and the choir assembling.
- In consultation with the coach, develop a tool by November 1, 2018 for evaluating worship that deals with questions such as: What worked well? Where were there gaps in the flow? What can we tweak or adjust?
- In order to reach people who are not already part of the worshipping community of Tecumseh UMC, begin to explore options for a second worship service to be held on a different

day or time, onsite or at a different location. Read and discuss the book *Welcome to Dinner, Church* by Verlon Fosner by January 31, 2019.

- Plan to attend REACH Summit in November 2018, or register for the REACH track related to starting a second service which will begin to meet in January 2019.

**2. Shifting our focus beyond our doors** – In order to maximize the efforts of your Witness and Outreach Teams and better up your social media Tecumseh UMC will implement the following:

A. Book Study and Worship Series - The pastor will preach a series of sermons using the resource *Get their Name* by Bob Farr, Doug Anderson, and Kay Kotan beginning the first Sunday of Lent 2019. The current witness and outreach committee members will read together and study the book beginning March 1, 2019. After completing the reading the committees will:

- In collaboration with the Pastor and coach, the Outreach Committee will develop a plan, no later than May 1, 2019, to be where the people are (i.e soccer games, construction site, an event for children to play ball, on the playground at the church). This will include two bridge events, the first to be held no later than September 30, 2019. Each event shall be evaluated no later than two weeks after the event, in consultation with the coach or her designee.

- Capitalize on events hosted on-site such as the Arts and Craft show by finding a way to gather contact information. For instance, you might offer a door prize which requires name and address, then follow up with a thank you for participation, and invitations to seasonal worship events.

- Outreach Committee chair and Women of Faith chair will work together to lead a collaborative study of *When Helping Hurts: The Small Group Experience*: Book and Online Video-Based Study on Alleviating Poverty by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert to begin no later than September 15, 2018. As a result of this study, begin to coordinate mission efforts of the two groups. These two groups will work together to create a plan for "ministry with" the new women and children's shelter. As you develop your plan consider contacting Flint: Asbury, Flint: Bethel, or Cass Community UMCs. This plan will be implemented December 1, 2018.

- The Witness Committee will read and discuss the book *Clip In: Risking Hospitality in Your Church* by Fiona Haworth and Jim Ozier beginning by January 15, 2019. Following the book read and discussion they will design an ongoing plan to follow up with guests and enhance congregational care. The plan will include goals for guest follow up, checking in with absentee church members, shut in visitation, and hospital visitation. The plan will be implemented beginning no later than April 15, 2019 and evaluated by the witness committee quarterly for effectiveness.

B. Additional signage - The Trustee Committee will purchase and install the following no later than April 1, 2019:

- Digital sign perpendicular to Bishop Reed Dr. and portable sign to be placed at the corner of Bishop Reed and Brown Street on Sunday morning and during special events

- Exterior signage at each parking lot to help first time guests know where to enter the church

- Interior signage at north entrance (where majority of people enter the building) indicating nursery, children's class rooms, and offices

C. Communications Task Force - The Pastor, in collaboration with the coach, will identify 3-4 individuals including the administrative assistant, by August 1, 2019 for a Communications Task Force to research effective communication. Resources may be Seymour Lake, Brighton First, and DeWitt Redeemer UMCs. The Task Force will:

- review the current website and facebook for visual clutter, insider language, up-to-date information, and a narrative specifically for first-time guests by August 30, 2019. Following this review, two persons will be identified to keep social media current.
- review the monthly newsletter for a redesign, giving specific attention to connection points, and how the newsletter can highlight an outward focus. The redesign will be completed by September 30, 2019. The newsletter will be distributed via email, with hard copies available for pick up on Sunday morning and for distribution to shut ins beginning in October 2019.

### **3. Accountable Structure**

A. Goal Setting and evaluation. You can never reach your goals if you don't have any. Goal setting creates an environment in which you will hold each other accountable for the fulfillment of your vision, mission, and values.

- An all-congregation Goal Setting Workshop facilitated by the coach, or designee, shall occur no later than February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019.
- Thereafter the Administrative Council, or equivalent body shall host and facilitate an annual long-range planning event. This planning event will be the foundation for ministry area goal-setting. The first of these long-range planning events shall occur no later than July 15, 2019. The effectiveness of all ministry goals shall be evaluated by the Administrative Council, or equivalent body, quarterly thereafter.
- The Administrative Council, or equivalent body, will be responsible for ongoing strategic mapping. This could include: annual retreats, evaluation of goals, necessary staff (paid and unpaid) reconfigurations, etc.

B. Stewardship - The pastor, in consultation with the coach, will create a Stewardship Education Team of 3-5 members by October 1, 2019 to plan and implement a stewardship education program. This program will teach the congregation that we are called to give out of our vision for what Christ can do and not out of obligation to a budget. This will be completed by December 30, 2019. Resources include David Bell from the Michigan United Methodist Foundation, the Lewis Center at Wesley Theological Seminary, and *the Spirituality of Fund Raising* by Henri Nouwen.

C. The pastor, in consultation with the coach will create a nominating and lay leadership development team of 4 to 6 people prior to Charge Conference 2019 with an emphasis on creating ministry teams that are matched by their spiritual gifts.

D. Policy governance enables the movement of all administrative responsibilities into one centralized body. It also includes establishing boundaries within which the pastor must function with the responsibility and authority to lead the church to accomplish its vision and mission. In policy governance, the pastor is accountable to the Administrative Council for ministry progress. In order to improve effectiveness, beginning September 2018 the Administrative Council will read *Leadership and Organization for Fruitful Congregations* by Stephan W. Ross, covering one chapter per month in preparation for discussion at meetings. The discussion will be led by the Council Chair.

The coach or designee shall facilitate the two-part workshop Accountable Leadership and Single Board Policy Governance. This shall be completed by December 1, 2019. Upon completion of the book study and workshop, the Administrative Council may consult with the District Superintendent to explore moving to an accountable leadership model.

E. The pastor shall facilitate monthly staff meetings for all paid staff beginning no later than August 1, 2018, for spiritual development, team building, and communication. By August 1, 2019 this should also include training, working toward goal setting, and a shared understanding of the congregation's mission, vision, and strategy. Available resources include *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, *Overcoming Dysfunctions of a Team*, and *The Advantage* by Patrick Lencioni.

### **Conclusion**

We, the consulting team, want to thank you for the opportunity to serve your congregation through this Vital Church Initiative assessment process. Our prayers and hope for your congregation are that God will use this process to help your church become more effective and fruitful. May God give you courage and strength as you move forward.

Bruce Kintigh, Lead Consultant  
Lisa Batten, Directive Coach  
LuAnn Rourke, Scribe

Town Hall Meeting Dates: Wednesday May 30<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m.  
Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup> following worship

Church Conference Date: Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup> following worship