



# Missional Church Consultation Initiative

*Menomonie United Methodist  
Church*

*Menomonie, Wisconsin*

*July 21, 2022*



*The Wisconsin Conference MCCI Team would like to thank Pastor Wendy Slaback and the leadership of Menomonie UMC for the hospitality on your MCCI Express Day and for the privilege of teaming with you. Our prayer is that God will use this process to focus and maximize your congregation's fruitfulness for Christ. Your church embodies resources and **strengths** ideally suited for next-level transformational ministry, as well as **concerns** that need to be addressed in order for the church to move forward.*

## Strengths

### 1. Loving, Caring Relationships.

Both leaders and members told the MCCI team that the atmosphere of the congregation is filled with **support, compassion and friendship**. Some have been members for years, developing longtime relationships throughout the various seasons of living. The church family connections are fostered through Sunday coffee hour time, serving together, Sunday school classes, attending worship and sharing joys and concerns, and participating in music ministries together. Especially, whenever a need has arisen the congregation is quick to step up and respond. The congregation's **financial generosity** extends not only to underwriting mission and ministry within the church, but also outward for community missional needs.

### 2. Building.

Menomonie UMC's **facility and grounds** were repeatedly named as another strength of the church. The building is **accessible**, with room for increased ministry in the future. A new **parking lot** and a **new boiler** have been recent enhancements. The church's **yard** is beautiful, and the **Ga-Ga ball pit** is an asset. The building's spaces allow for **outside group usage**. The church's location is in the midst of a "**mission field**" all around that's filled with persons not currently connected to a congregation—including children, teens and their families.

### 3. Pastor.

**Pastor Wendy** was recognized as an important strength of this church by both members and leaders alike. Her ability to provide **pastoral shepherding**, lead **inspiring worship services** as well as **meaningful funeral services**, and her willingness to **listen and care** are all deeply appreciated. The MCCI's online mystery worshipers also noted Pastor Wendy's effective ability to **speak to and connect with those who are attending worship Sundays via the live stream**.

### 4. Monday's Meal.

Menomonie UMC has a long history of **servicing its community through mission**. A recent new ministry named **Monday's Meal** was named as a strength, once again demonstrating the church's compassion for those in need by providing food prepared by a team of volunteers that's picked up curbside.

### 5. Welcoming Diversity.

A strength reported to the MCCI team by many was the church's **openness to welcome and include all persons**. This has been demonstrated by Menomonie UMC's willingness to be the host location of the **Joyful Noise** choir rehearsals for those with special needs (and also an **after-worship Bible Study for those with special needs**).



Additionally, the church has entered an agreement to become the host location for the new **Menomonie Korean Church** that will utilize building space for worship on Sunday afternoons.

## Concerns

### 1. Missing: The Younger Generation.

One of the most often-repeated concerns throughout the MCCI Express Day and evening was that as older members pass, **only a limited number of new younger adults and their children and teens** are being added to the congregation. Some believe that an entire generation is now almost completely missing from Menomonie UMC. Along with this has been an **attendance decline** (including the impact of the COVID pandemic shutdown) that has added to the congregation's concern about its sustainable future.

### 2. Lack of "Know How."

Members and leaders described their concern that though the church is surrounded by homes with children, teens and their families who are not currently involved in a church, **little success has been realized in recent efforts to connect and welcome them into the life of Menomonie UMC**. In the words of one leader, "We just don't seem to know how or what to do to reach them—we need to learn some new skills to help ourselves."

### 3. Not Quite "Guest Ready."

Though the church building has been well cared for since the congregation moved into it in 1979, a number of comments of concern were made to the MCCI team that **various areas of the church now appear dated and some have accumulated extra clutter**—all of which would not provide an appealing environment to potential new younger visitors attending worship or other church events.

### 4. Communication Issues.

A frequent concern named during the MCCI Express Day was described as **issues with communication**. This was explained both as **internal** communication issues between the congregation, leadership and staff to ensure everyone is on the same page informationally—and also **external** communication issues how to best "tell the stories" to the community about what God is doing at Menomonie UMC—and get the exciting, invitational word out beyond the church walls to potential newcomers about what is happening and when.

### 5. Invisible to the Community.

The MCCI team heard stories of concern from members and leaders about how other churches in Menomonie have become well-known for their youth ministry, or children's ministry or other emphasis—but that Menomonie UMC has yet to establish itself across the community right now with a unique **signature ministry** for which it can become recognized as the active "go-to" center of the entire geographic area.



## Next Steps: Prescriptions

### 1. Building New Friendships with Neighbors: Triad Strategy.

This prescription is in response to the congregation's concern about not knowing how to practically build relationships with those in the surrounding "mission field" who are not yet connected with a church home. MCCI has a unique **Triad Strategy approach** to encourage people to return again and again, eventually becoming part of the congregation. Upon acceptance of this report the MCCI will provide an MCCI "**Triad Strategy**" **prescription coach** to provide equipping of new skills to the Menomonie UMC leaders, members and staff.

The prescription coach will come on site to provide a scheduled **all-church/leadership Triad Strategy Training and Implementation Workshop**. The **Triad Strategy** approach is a key concept from the MCCI resourcing. It is a powerful method to help congregations move from holding single events --to instead strategizing a series of related events/activities that provide opportunities at which church members have the opportunity to form friendships with newcomers, and to welcome them back repeatedly as they eventually become part of the church family.

This training and implementation workshop will be **scheduled** at a date/time on the church calendar that Pastor Wendy, the staff and the Accountable Leadership Board believe the majority of the congregation will be available to attend. The "implementation" segment of the workshop will include **brainstorming, planning and timelining** a few potential Triads that build upon existing church events coming up in the future.

After the workshop, the Accountable Leadership Board and Pastor Wendy will ensure that all formerly single-event church efforts will be transformed into Triads that apply the new strategic approach. This will set the stage for impacting and creating relational momentum to connect with the church's "mission field" in new exciting, effective ways.

### 2. Getting Guest-Ready: "Refresh."

In response to the concern that some of the church's spaces now appear dated and unappealing to a potential new younger generation of worship service and ministry participants, upon acceptance of this MCCI report a **Space Refresh** prescription coach will be provided.

By or before **October 1, 2022** Pastor Wendy and the Leadership Board will identify a **Space Refresh prescription team** consisting of both church members and leaders to team together with the designated prescription coach's guidance. The purpose of this prescription team's efforts will be to **declutter and décor-refresh all common spaces of the church building that visitors typically frequent**—including hallways, narthex, bulletin boards, Sanctuary and its community space, etc. The Leadership Board will ensure that the work of the Space Refresh team receives the financial support needed. The goal will be that by **Advent 2022** the Space Refresh team's efforts will be completed, and the common spaces of the church building will provide an updated, welcoming environment for the next generation.



### 3. Communication.

This prescription is in response to leaders' and members' concern that both internal and external communication needs to be improved. Upon acceptance of this report, the MCCI will provide a **Church Communications/Social Media prescription coach**. By or before **October 15, 2022** Pastor Wendy and the Accountable Leadership Board will constitute two prescription sub-teams:

- An **Internal Communications Sub-Team** that with the prescription coach's guidance and expertise, will evaluate and provide recommendations for improvements to church communication systems between the congregation, Leadership Board, pastor and staff -- including but not limited to the newsletter and its content.
- An **External Communications Sub-Team** that, with the prescription coach's guidance and expertise, will focus on developing strategies to help "tell the story" about what God is doing in and through Menomonie UMC to the community and beyond. This may involve new or added social media efforts, recommendations for enhancements to the church's website, plus other new efforts.

Each team will bring a report of their work plus action step recommendations to the Accountable Leadership Board by or before **December 2022**, and upon approval, implementation work by each team will begin immediately with the prescription coach's continued guidance as helpful.

### 4. "Signature" Ministry.

To address the concern that some believe Menomonie UMC is largely "invisible" in its community, upon acceptance of this report Pastor Wendy and the Accountable Leadership Board will identify and assemble a **New Ministries for Persons with Special Needs** prescription team—by or before **October 30, 2022**. Building upon the foundation of the Joyful Noise choir that already rehearses at the church plus the after-worship special needs Bible study, this team will **research and consider additional new ways** to ramp up and expand Menomonie UMC's welcome, connection with, and discipleship of persons with special needs and their families from across the entire community and beyond.

A sister MCCI congregation in Roseville, Minnesota, Centennial United Methodist Church, will be invited by the MCCI to provide a prescription coach for Menomonie UMC. Centennial UMC already has a well-established "Flames" Ministry for adults with special needs for which the church is widely known, and which has become the church's **signature ministry** in the Minneapolis area. The prescription coach will provide ideas, possibilities and guidance as Menomonie UMC's prescription team likewise researches and considers **additional options for ministry with those having special needs plus their families**.

The New Ministries for Persons with Special Needs prescription team will bring their recommendations for potential next steps to the Accountable Leadership Board. If approved to move forward, Pastor Wendy will rally the entire congregation to join in with implementation of the recommendations. **Every church member will be invited to consider a way to serve in the new ministry initiatives**, as a growing number of special needs persons along with their families are welcomed into the Menomonie UMC friendship and faith connection.



## “Phase 2” Prescription

### 5. Worship and Community for the Next Generation.

**After the previous four prescriptions are underway and progressing**, Pastor Wendy and the Accountable Leadership Board may request an MCCI prescription coach to begin the following additional “Phase 2” prescription, which builds upon the foundation the others will have laid.

In further response to the leadership and congregational concern about reaching and welcoming the new younger generation, the MCCI will provide a prescription coach to walk alongside a new MCCI **Family Worship** prescription work team that the church will create—which will also include Pastor Wendy plus the youth and children’s ministry staff persons.

The purpose of this prescription team’s work will be, with the prescription coach’s guidance, to:

- Dream, design and plan a **potential new weekly worship gathering** at a different time than the existing worship service. This service will be specifically “user friendly” for families with children and teens, to be held **on a day and time convenient to this target demographic** in the church’s mission field all around.
- The new family worship gathering’s **space location** will be carefully considered with the help of the prescription coach. A space in the church building other than the traditional Sanctuary may be the most conducive to the worship style, music style and format of the new family worship gathering.
- With the help of the coach, consideration may be given to the **possibility of including a “family meal”** for everyone after the worship gathering, or other means to enhance friendships and community together when gathered.

With the prescription coach’s guidance, a **timeline** will be created to prepare for the new family worship gathering’s creation and design; identifying and building a new worship team experienced in relevant music and style for the families with children and teens in the surrounding mission field; clarifying preparation steps to be taken towards the launch; and how to continue to grow and fuel the family worship gathering ongoing. The MCCI **Internal Communications** team and the MCCI **External Communications** team (see prescription # 3) will each collaborate with the Family Worship prescription team. Their roles will be to create dynamic plans for **keeping the existing congregation informed as this unfolds**, and also **communicating externally/invitationally to the mission field’s families** about this new opportunity for friendship, faith and inspiration. External communication will include social media promotion.

## ADDENDUM

**The following two options are not prescriptions** included in Menomonie UMC’s official church conference vote to accept this report. Rather, they are **options offered to the church** by the MCCI, if the vote is to accept the report, as additional pathways to continue to enhance the effectiveness of the church’s lay and paid leadership. Should the leadership of Menomonie UMC decide to exercise either or both of these options, Pastor Wendy together with the Accountable Leadership Board chair should make written email request to Rev. Scott Carlson, the Director of Congregational Development for the Wisconsin Conference ([scottcarlson@wisconsinumc.org](mailto:scottcarlson@wisconsinumc.org)).



**Option 1** - Menomonie UMC transitioned organizationally to the **Accountable Leadership Board** structure a few years ago. The MCCI has found that a “**refresher training**” at least every three years on function, roles and methods of congregational communication about decisions/direction can be invaluable to those serving on the board as well as to the pastor. If requested, the MCCI will arrange for an experienced Accountable Leadership Board trainer to schedule a date/time with the church to provide a refresher training for Menomonie UMC’s ALB.

**Option 2** – Should the church vote “yes” to approve these prescriptions and move forward with them, it may become essential for **the church’s staff to gain new skills to enlarge their leadership capacity for inviting, engaging and deploying the congregation** to serve in expanded ways. If requested, the MCCI will identify an appropriate coaching source for this and underwrite up to half of the cost for the additional coaching/training for **Pastor Wendy, Youth Ministry coordinator Amanda Viana, and Director of Children and Family Ministries Amy Webb.**

## Immediate Governance Decision Steps

The congregation will hold the following **Town Hall Meetings** within the next 30 days to discuss these prescriptions:

1. **Sunday, July 31 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary**
2. **Wednesday, August 3 at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary**
3. **Monday, August 15 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary**

**Facilitators** for these Town Hall Meetings will be identified by Pastor Wendy in conjunction with the church’s MCCI team.

The **congregation will vote on this report** to either embrace it or reject it at an official **church conference** led by the district superintendent on **Thursday, August 18 at 6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.**

If embraced by a **75% or more vote** of the official membership present, the MCCI Team will designate prescription coaches and team with Menomonie UMC to implement these prescriptions.

If the prescriptions are rejected, the MCCI partnership process will cease.

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### **Respectfully Submitted by:**

*Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, Director of the Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI)*

*Rev. Scott Carlson, Director of Congregational Development, Wisconsin Conference*

*Rev. Lori Lossie, Lead Pastor of Still Waters United Methodist Church, Jackson, Wisconsin*

*Rev. Jason Mahnke, Director of Programming and Campaigns, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation*

*Rev. Cindy Thompson, Lead Pastor of St. Luke United Methodist Church, Sheboygan, Wisconsin*

*Rev. Rebecca Voss, Lead Pastor of First United Methodist Church, Wausau, Wisconsin*

*Rev. Gary Holmes, Lead Pastor of Sugar River United Methodist Church, Verona, Wisconsin*