



# Missional Church Consultation Initiative

*Trinity  
United Methodist Church*

*Beaver Dam, Wisconsin  
March 6, 2024*



*The Wisconsin Conference MCCI Team would like to thank Pastor Eric Taylor and the leadership of Trinity United Methodist Church in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin for the hospitality on your MCCI Express Day and for the privilege of teaming with you. Our prayer is that God will use this prayer-fueled discernment 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. Our Pastor and Church Leadership.

Repeated by both leaders and members, **Pastor Eric** was named as a primary strength of this church. His preaching, creativity and work to move Trinity into the future (especially with the increasing quality of Trinity's online worship) are all greatly valued. The dedication of the **staff** and the tireless **core of leaders** who serve faithfully are also deeply appreciated, as are those who lead and participate in Trinity's **music ministry**.

### 2. Our Building.

Those who spoke with the MCCI team directly, as well as those attending the evening MCCI congregational session, identified Trinity's **facility and its space for ministry** as a strength. Especially, individuals commented on the **beautiful stained glass** in the Sanctuary and other aesthetics that enhance the environment as the congregation worships together.

### 3. Our Friendships.

Members of Trinity told the MCCI team that the church family is filled with **love, laughter, joy, and close relationships**. Persons in this congregation support one another through prayer, tangible acts of care, and offering one another welcome and grace.

### 4. Cozy Corner—and Missional Outreach.

The "**Cozy Corner**" ministry was mentioned frequently to the MCCI team as a strength of Trinity. Cozy Corner was described as not only a welcoming place for those involved in its activities on site at the church, but also as a **creative source of new ways for the church to become in mission to the community** (such as the blanket ministry and other efforts). Additionally, Trinity UMC's **longtime heart for justice and mission** is lived out through numerous other venues: Trinity is now a member of the Chamber of Commerce, which has opened doors for additional congregational community service beyond Trinity's other annual church outreach events.



# Concerns

## 1. Volunteers.

An often-mentioned concern from leaders and members alike was that **Trinity UMC's work is primarily accomplished by the pastor, paid staff and the church's faithful leaders.** Staff and leaders expressed desire for clarity in how to engage the entire congregation (everyone) to serve out of individual giftedness and interests—and that they believe the whole church needs a shift of perspective, through both spiritual and practical inspiration, about this.

## 2. Communication.

One of the most common concerns the MCCI Team heard throughout the Express Day event was the comment: **"We have a communication problem here."** Some of the members believe they aren't certain what the Accountable Leadership Board (ALB) is doing, others not sure what events and plans are upcoming or what decisions have been made. Despite the church's regular efforts with bulletin, eletter, FlockNotes, announcements each Sunday during the worship services and other venues, a concern still exists that "communication is an issue."

## 3. Visitor Awareness.

MCCI "Mystery worshipers" sent to attend services at Trinity reported positive feedback about sermons, music and other aspects of the worship services, but most also shared that few (if any) Trinity churchgoers spoke or made efforts to welcome and engage them in conversation as visitors. The crowded Sunday morning fellowship and conversation time in the narthex among longtime members didn't seem welcoming to these newcomers, who felt mostly ignored. Signage wasn't fully adequate to help them navigate which door to enter for worship or find their way through the building. Concern was expressed by Trinity members and leaders that the church's **overall environment for visitors needs to be enhanced.**

## 4. Reaching Younger People.

Leaders and members of all ages told the MCCI Team of their concern that **Trinity is not reaching new people well—especially the younger generations.** Some wondered what would engage and appeal to those without a church home in the Beaver Dam community, especially parents and their children—and how to connect and befriend them.



## Next Steps: Prescriptions

### 1. Unleashing the Church to Serve: “Hero Maker.”

In response to the concern the MCCI Team heard about the need to engage the entire congregation to serve, upon acceptance of this report Pastor Eric will schedule a multiple-week worship service sermon series based on the bestselling church resource, *Hero Maker* (by Dave Ferguson) as soon as the church calendar allows.

*Hero Maker* is a powerful and effective approach that sets the stage for a church to shift from pastor/staff centered—to unleashing the entire congregation to serve and multiply Christ’s ministry both within and beyond the church walls.

Pastor Eric and the Accountable Leadership Board (ALB) will use the MCCI’s recommended approach to identify and create a new short-term **Hero Maker Team**. This team will partner with the pastor to strategize a plan so that during the weeks of the sermon series, **every existing Trinity class and small group** will also utilize the *Hero Maker* discussion participant guide to go deeper and apply the spiritual and practical learnings into each person’s own unique individual capacity to serve Christ. This will include the children’s ministry (with age-appropriate application). Additionally, the *Hero Maker Team* will identify several new leaders who will facilitate **new, short term discussion groups** to be scheduled at various times each week of the sermon series (including online), with the goal that **everyone who is part of Trinity UMC also participates in a class or group each week utilizing, discussing, and applying the Hero Maker material**.

The Trinity **paid staff** will also form their own weekly discussion group together using the *Hero Maker* participant guide during these weeks. Likewise, the **ALB** will also form its own *Hero Maker* participant guide discussion group.

A **prescription coach** provided by the MCCI will assist Pastor Eric, the paid staff group, and the ALB *Hero Maker* group with application to their respective roles of responsibility and leadership.

The prescription coach will also advise **next steps** following the churchwide *Hero Maker* initiative to help ensure implementation in all aspects.

### 2. Communication Enhancement.

In response to congregational concern that at present, Trinity has “communication issues” among staff, leaders and members, upon acceptance of this report the MCCI will provide a **Communication Enhancement prescription coach** to help the church take all dimensions of communication to the next level of effectiveness.

By or before the end of **May 2024**, Pastor Eric and the ALB will utilize the MCCI’s recommended approach to assemble two new short-term teams:

- An **Internal Communications Design Team** of approximately 6 persons that will include representation from the ALB, the paid staff, long-time members and new/newer members (or attendees). The Communication Enhancement prescription coach will walk alongside this team to clarify the church’s current internal methodologies of communication; assess effectiveness; identify potential enhancements to processes, collaboration and practical results; and create a timeline with specific



steps for efficiency, effectiveness, and improvements going forward. The coach will continue to advise and create accountability until the steps have been implemented.

- An **External Communications Design Team** of approximately 6 persons that will be comprised similarly to the Internal Communications Design Team (but with different persons). Likewise, the Communication Enhancement coach will walk alongside this team as current and potential methodology and efforts are assessed (and enhancements identified) for communicating about Trinity UMC (its stories, its breakthroughs, its mission and service) outward to the Beaver Dam community and beyond. Specific steps and timeline for this team's work will also be created, and the coach will continue alongside until implementation is well underway.

The work of both of these teams will be accomplished by **September 2024**, or latest December 2024.

### 3. Guest Welcome.

In response to concern about Trinity UMC's current congregational hospitality practices, upon acceptance of this report Pastor Eric and the ALB will use the MCCI's recommended approach by or before the end of **May 2024** to create a new short-term **Guest Welcome Team**.

This new team will include a few of Trinity's newest attendees or members (to benefit from their "fresh eyes" perspective) as well as a few who have not previously served as part of the church's usher/greeter teams, plus a few who have. The MCCI will provide an experienced prescription coach who will partner with the Guest Welcome Team, help assess both Trinity's online and in-person worship services for guest friendliness, train and advise specific steps to increase the atmosphere of welcome for newcomers, and monitor the progress of the new Guest Welcome Team's leadership and work.

The Guest Welcome Team's efforts and improvements will be in place by or before **September 2024**, or no later than **December 2024**.

### 4. "The Listening Church": Reaching New People.

In response to the concern the MCCI Team heard that Trinity is not reaching new people well, especially the younger generations, upon acceptance of this report Pastor Eric and the ALB will utilize the MCCI's recommended approach to constitute a new short-term **Listening Church Deployment Team** by or before **July 2024**.

The MCCI will engage **Rev. Luke Edwards** as Trinity's prescription coach. Luke is the creator of "The Listening Church" plan, which guides congregations already invested in a Breakthrough Prayer Initiative to move deeper into an intentional community listening strategy: how God is spiritually leading members (and/or the entire congregation) to engage and befriend new people in your community with God's love, through meaningful and impactful new ministry.



The pastor and the Listening Church Deployment Team will schedule Luke to come on site and provide a churchwide learning/training seminar on becoming a “Listening Church” —including practical, hands-on next steps to take going forward. Luke will continue alongside via zoom/email/phone to coach, advise and guide Trinity’s Listening Church Deployment Team as it leads and mobilizes the congregation forward with listening, discerning, and exploring ways to meet new people where they are and walk alongside them towards Jesus.

## Governance Decision Steps

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

1. **Tuesday, March 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary**
2. **Sunday, March 17 at 10:45 a.m. in the Sanctuary**
3. **Thursday, April 4 at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary**

**Facilitator(s)** for these Town Hall Meetings have been identified by Pastor Eric in conjunction with the church’s MCCI implementation 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 **Sunday, April 7 at 9 a.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 Trinity UMC to implement these prescriptions.

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

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**Respectfully Submitted by:**

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

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

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

*Rev. Park Hunter, North East District Superintendent of the Wisconsin Conference*