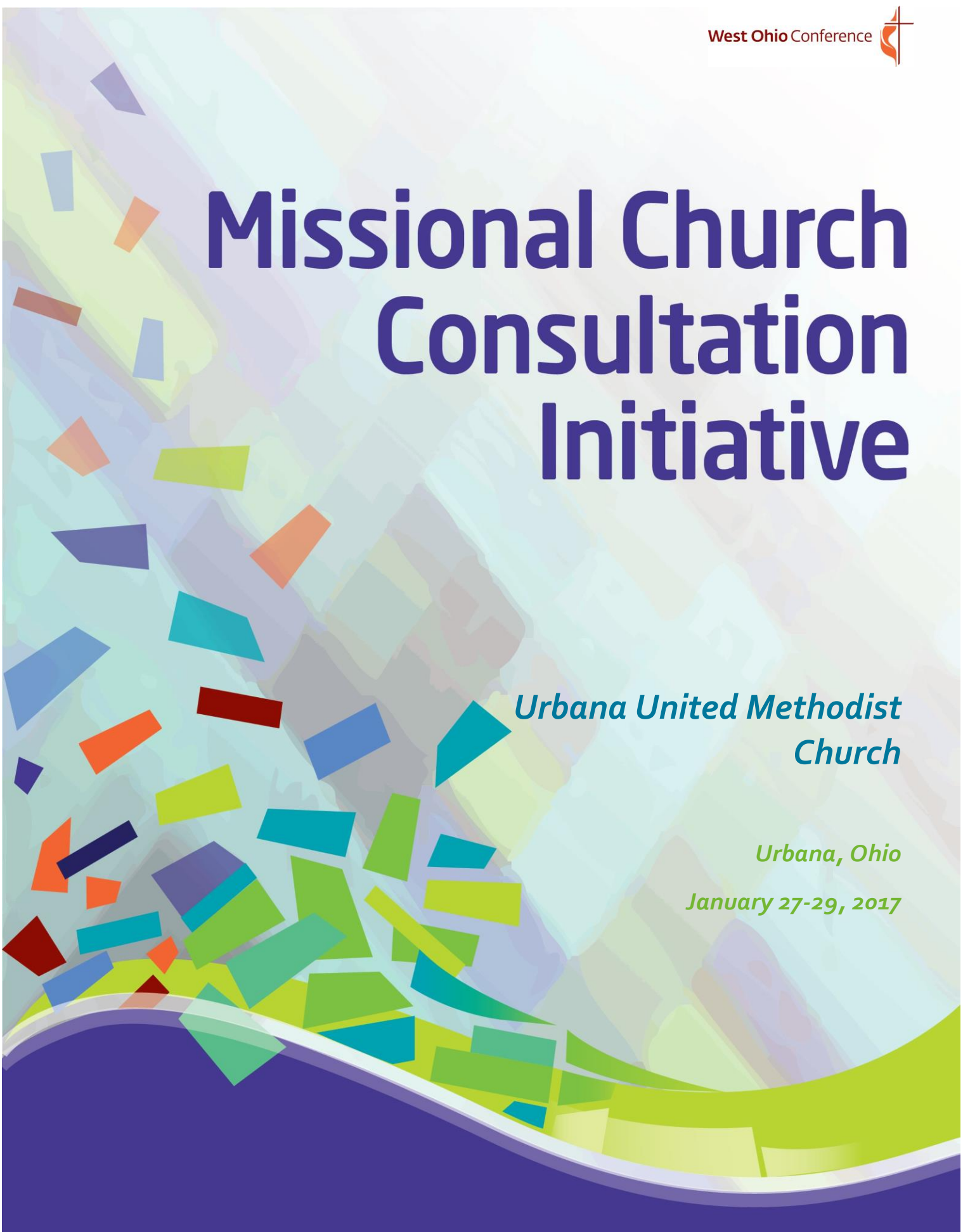


Missional Church Consultation Initiative

*Urbana United Methodist
Church*

Urbana, Ohio

January 27-29, 2017





*The Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI) Team would like to thank Pastor Jim Lillibridge and the leadership of **Urbana United Methodist Church** for your hospitality this weekend and for the privilege of teaming with you. Our prayer is that God will use this process to focus and maximize the potential of your congregation for fruitfulness for Christ. Urbana UMC embodies numerous resources and **strengths** ideally suited for next-level transformational ministry, as well as some **concerns** that need to be addressed in order for the church to move forward.*

Strengths

1. Church Building and Location.

Urbana UMC's **location** is ideal for **missional engagement** in the community. Being a part of the downtown area not only offers great **visibility** but also easy **accessibility**. The attractive children's ministry area and high-tech youth room offer **exceptional opportunities** to minister to children and students. The seating in the sanctuary provides great flexibility, and there is plenty of room in the facility, making it ideal for **current and future ministry opportunities**.

2. Community Presence.

The congregation is highly involved in **servicing** the community. The church's mission of igniting faith through serving is clearly lived out in the **Wherehouse**, which is an official Second Harvest food pantry of Urbana where God's love meets practical needs. The **Center for Creative Child Care** is another huge outreach. It was the first child daycare in Champaign County and has been serving young families for over 40 years. Urbana UMC purchased the **Gloria Theatre** in 2014 and formed the GrandWorks Foundation to operate the theatre on its behalf, with the hope that the theatre will again be a gift to the Urbana community just as it was 75 years ago. The church also participates in mission/outreach events like the **Week of Hope, Serve a Soldier 5k run** and the **Pay It Forward Kids Consignment Sale**. These acts and many others continue to highlight the church's kind, caring and loving witness in the community.

3. Pastor, Music and Ministries.

Pastor Jim has brought **healing** and **visionary** leadership to Urbana UMC. He is **highly trusted** by the church family and is **well respected** by those both inside and outside the church. Another strength listed by students and adults alike is the **exceptional music ministry** of Urbana. The choir and praise band are both incredible assets to the church, and people regularly express how appreciative they are of the quality of the music program.

Both the children's and youth ministry are greatly appreciated at Urbana UMC. The student ministry **reaches** many **unchurched teens** in the community, making them feel welcome and at home. It is a safe place for them to have fun as well as learn about Jesus. Likewise, there were multiple comments expressing appreciation for the children's ministry, which is teaching our most **precious young lives** about Christ. The hard work of both Christopher and Molly is seen as a great asset to Urbana UMC.



4. Courage.

From its humble beginning as circuit riders who ministered to settlers in 1804 to recently purchasing the Gloria Theatre, Urbana UMC has continued its history of **risk-taking** and **courage**. This kind of daring faith is the **hallmark** and **DNA** of Urbana UMC. Urbana has persevered in this legacy most recently through its **Daring Faith initiative**, which is a call to **increase worship attendance**, start a **health resource center**, attend to **physical repairs** to the facility, help church members **grow in faith** through **small group participation** and work to **restore and revive the Urbana area** culturally, socially, economically and spiritually. Courage has allowed and continues to motivate Urbana UMC to make a significant difference for Jesus in its community.

Concerns

1. Mobilization and Connections.

The MCCI team heard concerns this weekend that there is a **shortage of volunteers** to fully support the children's ministry and other ministry efforts. The hardworking Urbana UMC staff struggles to cover all bases needed, making efficient **organization and deployment** of the church's ideas and new projects a challenge. Also, members are concerned that consistent **bridges of relationship and connection** are yet to be built to the **church preschool's children and their families**, and that the many **teens from the community** who attend on Wednesday nights, along with their families, need to be **welcomed and connected** more fully into the church.

2. Radical Hospitality: Improvements Needed.

Mystery worshipers who visited Urbana UMC commented that they found **church signage** inadequate, that a warm welcome and genuine hospitality either before or after each worship service was sometimes **lacking** and that the **children's ministry classrooms** were difficult to find. Other aspects of "guest-readiness" were also missing or inconsistent, resulting in most of the mystery worshipers admitting they were unlikely to return to Urbana UMC.

3. Sunday Mornings.

One of the often-expressed concerns heard this weekend was frustration with the church's **Sunday morning schedule**. Some feel that the contemporary service is too early at 9 a.m. Others shared that the brevity of the Sunday School hour from 10 to 11 a.m. makes class time too short, doesn't allow church members social time before and after worship services and makes it difficult for people to serve in ministry positions like ushering, greeting and leading in children/student ministries. Also, a desire was expressed for continuing to **improve both worship services** in terms of quality, flow and relevance for church members and for newcomers.

4. Reaching New People for Christ.

Urbana UMC leaders and members have a deep desire to see the **Gloria Theatre** used to reach people for Christ but are uncertain how that should happen. Additionally, the congregation has a heart for reaching its **immediate "mission field" for Christ** but lacks a **congregational strategy** for connecting with its neighbors.



Prescriptions

NOTE: All new prescription work teams will be formed using the Primary Leadership Components Assessment for best team balance and effectiveness. Pastor Jim will provide leadership on use of this tool to build the teams.

1. *Daring Faith: Strong Leadership.*

Upon acceptance of this report, Pastor Jim and the SPRC chair will immediately partner with the MCCI's **staff review** prescription coach team. In order for the staff to support the congregation's accomplishment of the prescriptions, **all existing paid staff positions and responsibilities** will be reviewed. Potential outcomes may include position reconfigurations, new positions, adjustments of some current positions or other changes. **New job descriptions** will be created in alignment with the prescription work. A primary responsibility of every ministry staff person will be to recruit, train and deploy congregational members to serve out of their call and giftedness. A structured **staff accountability system** for tracking and assessing staff members' individual "fruitfulness" goals will be put into place.

A **Children/Youth/Family Ministry Strategy Team** will be assembled by Pastor Jim, Molly and Christopher by or before **April 2017**. This team will either participate in the West Ohio Conference's "**All in the Family**" **Traction Track**, which will begin this spring (a 9-month intensive training and coaching opportunity to position Urbana UMC to reach and effectively disciple new children, teens and their families), or else receive personal prescription coaching by the "All in the Family" lead coach, RaNae Street. Throughout either course of training/coaching, special coaching attention will also be given to learning how to build bridges for the church's preschool children and families into the life of the congregation. Coaching focus will also be given to identifying additional steps to connect the many teens from the community who attend Urbana UMC activities on Wednesday nights, and their families, into congregational life and relationships. The administrative council will make certain that **space and financial needs** for these priorities are addressed in accordance with the All in the Family prescription coach and the Children/Youth/Family Ministry Strategy Team's recommendations.

Finally, in order to ramp up ongoing **deep financial discipleship of the congregation** so that the church is increasingly capable of adequately underwriting its mission and ministry, Pastor Jim and a new "Growing Generous Givers" Team of at least five persons will attend the MCCI's **Growing Generous Givers Team Training** on **Saturday, March 25, 2017**. At this 5-hour training seminar the pastor and team will learn how to fully implement a 12-month Growing Generous Givers plan, how to help the congregation grow spiritually through financial discipleship and other valuable and practical tools. After the training seminar, Pastor Jim and the Growing Generous Givers Team will return to Urbana UMC and work together to fully implement what they've learned during the coming year and into the future.

2. *Daring Faith: Extravagant Welcome.*

Pastor Jim and the administrative council will assemble a new **Extravagant Welcome Team** by or before **April 2017** to help Urbana UMC prepare to more effectively **connect with new guests, provide positive follow-up** and **assimilate guests** into the church family, discipleship and serving.



With the guidance of a prescription coach, the Extravagant Welcome Team will **create and implement systems** to ensure that each visitor to Urbana UMC is welcomed with warm and thoughtful attention upon arrival and departure and receives an invitation to return for deeper connection. With the coach's guidance, the Extravagant Welcome Team will **recruit and train other needed servant sub-teams** so that this entire new system is fully functional by or before **Advent 2017**. The Extravagant Welcome Team and the prescription coach will also **train all existing greeters and usher teams** so that everyone is working in coordination as Urbana UMC welcomes new guests.

In order to ensure that the Urbana UMC interior is "guest-ready" for visitors, Pastor Jim and the administrative council will identify a **Facility Guest-Readiness Team**. The same prescription coach will also guide this team as it reviews all hallways, stairwells, gathering spaces and restrooms typically frequented by guests and declutters these areas so that they are in top shape and as appealing as possible to first-time guests. The work of this team will be complete by or before **August 2017**.

The Urbana UMC team currently responsible for the church's **signage upgrades** will continue its work (or a new signage team may be created if needed) making the property as user-friendly as possible for new guests—such as by making it clearer **how to quickly find the church's children's ministry classrooms**. This team and the pastor may also consider a possible redesign/rebranding of the church's graphic "look" and logo on signage, print and electronic materials and any other visual upgrades that will help Urbana UMC become uniquely recognizable to the community. The design/redesign work will be done either by Christopher (who has a graphic design degree), or by an MCCI prescription coach if requested. The team will also review and update the website to ensure that it fits the new brand/look of the church and is as guest-friendly as possible, since nine out of ten people now choose to visit a church based on the church's website. This work will be complete by or before **fall 2017**.

3. *Daring Faith: Sunday Mornings.*

Upon the acceptance of this report, the following steps will be taken in order to ensure that the **Sunday morning** ministries of Urbana UMC continue to **deepen and grow in impact**.

- Pastor Jim, together with all those who are responsible for the various aspects of the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday morning worship services, will be provided a **Worship Enhancement** prescription coach by or before **May 2017**. The coach will come alongside to review every element of both Sunday morning worship services and share guidance and coaching on how to maximize each for powerful spiritual impact, best "flow" and user-friendliness for new guests. The coach's initial guidance will be implemented by or before **September 2017**, with ongoing review and guidance by the coach over the next two years to make Sunday morning worship increasingly excellent and relevant to all ages.
- The Worship Enhancement prescription coach will also provide guidance and expertise as Urbana UMC develops a remedy to the **Sunday morning worship services/Sunday School scheduling challenges** currently in existence.

A **Sunday Schedule Discernment Team** will be assembled by Pastor Jim and the administrative council that includes the appropriate staff plus an attendee from the 9 a.m. and from the 11 a.m. worship services, a choir member, a band member, a children's ministry Sunday School teacher, a Sunday morning youth ministry adult volunteer and a representative from each of the two adult Sunday School classes. Pastor Jim and the Worship Enhancement prescription coach will facilitate the discussion, prayer and discernment of the team as a proposal for a new Sunday morning worship and class schedule that is more convenient for both the congregation and potential new guests is clarified.



- A general appraisal of the new proposed Sunday morning schedule will be accomplished through two **Town Hall meetings**, and the schedule will be **circulated widely** throughout all church groups and ministries so that **full information and communication** about the upcoming schedule adjustments is accomplished. Upon final approval by the pastor and administrative council, the new Sunday morning schedule will be implemented by or before **September 2017**.

4. *Daring Faith: Reaching and Connecting with the Community.*

At what he feels is the most strategic time, Pastor Jim will call the entire congregation to a **30-day “Prayers for Possibilities”** initiative on behalf of the Gloria Theatre’s potential and its use for missional impact for Christ.

- A **30-day scripture and prayer calendar** will be distributed to all ages, so that everyone is praying for God’s best future use of the Gloria Theatre with the same daily focus.
- Each week in the worship services held during the “Prayers for Possibilities” initiative, at least one or two church members will share their **2-minute “God Story”**—teens being included as well— in order to remind the congregation of how powerful it is when lives are touched and turned to faith.
- On one of the Sundays during the 30-day season Pastor Jim will lead an **all-church prayer walk** from Urbana UMC to the Gloria Theatre following the final Sunday worship service or between the two Sunday services. Congregational members will pray for God’s blessing on **each neighboring business** they pass in downtown Urbana as everyone walks to the theatre. Upon arrival, Pastor Jim will lead the congregation to surround the theatre and pray for God to **break through with clarity** regarding **how the Gloria Theatre should be used** in order to reach more and more people with the message and love of Jesus. The congregation may also **prayer walk throughout the inside** of the Gloria Theatre, asking for God to bless the building in every way for Kingdom impact. On the walk back to the church, the congregation will pray for any additional downtown businesses as they are passed.
- On the final Sunday of the 30-day “Prayers for Possibilities” initiative the congregation will hold **one unified worship celebration service** at the Gloria Theatre. Clint will design an incredible morning extravaganza of music and celebration, which will include the **choir and band** leading worship together. All downtown Urbana businesses will be **invited to attend** the unified Prayers for Possibilities celebration service. During the service, Pastor Jim will offer a **prayer of consecration and commissioning** for the **Gloria Theatre GrandWorks Foundation** Board members.
- Following the 30-day season of all-church prayer, Pastor Jim and Don Sanders will assemble a **Theatre Possibilities Team** and will meet with a prescription coach. The prescription coach’s guidance will help Pastor Jim, Don and the team continue to clarify how to **specifically connect Urbana UMC, the Gloria Theatre and the community** for **disciplemaking** in Christ’s name.

To help Urbana UMC members take spiritual responsibility to **reach out to love and serve the church’s neighbors** in downtown Urbana, Pastor Jim and the administrative council will assemble a **#Bless Team** by or before **summer 2017**. A prescription coach will be provided to help the **#Bless Team** establish a systematic way for the congregation to **pray for and bless a different downtown business** at least every other month:



- The #Bless Team will **select** a downtown business for the church to befriend and send several church members to **become acquainted** with the business's owner and employees, **bring** them homemade cookies or snacks provided by Urbana members, **ask** how the church might help serve in any way, and **notify** the business that the **church family will be praying** for God's blessing on that business during the coming month.
- On the first Sunday of that month, **cards** will be distributed to the entire congregation with the name of the business, as well as a printed **prayer** that each person can pray on behalf of the business that month (or prayer requests from the business).
- On a **selected date** during that month, church members will be invited to **patronize** the business, introduce themselves to the employees as from Urbana UMC and inform employees that they have been prayed for, shop or enjoy a meal at the business that day and show friendship and support in other ways.
- The **business owner** and/or employees will be **invited** by Pastor Jim or other church leaders to attend worship the following Sunday and be recognized and honored as the church's valued neighbors.

Addendum

After the four prescriptions above are underway and gaining traction, Pastor Jim and Urbana UMC leadership may contact the MCCI to schedule a churchwide informational orientation about a **12-person streamlined Leadership Board**. This orientation will explain to the entire congregation how a streamlined board operates and the process for moving from a traditional structure to this more flexible and nimble accountability model. Following this orientation, the congregation may choose to set a date for the District Superintendent to return for a church conference vote on whether to accept the new structure. Assuming a positive vote, the MCCI team will provide a prescription coach to guide Pastor Jim in the board member application process, selection and training of the new board and transitioning Urbana UMC to operating in the new, streamlined structure.

Immediate Governance Decision Steps

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

1. **Tuesday, February 7 at 7 p.m.**
2. **Sunday, February 19 at 10 a.m. (no choir that day)**
3. **Tuesday, February 21 at 7 p.m.**

Facilitators for these Town Hall Meetings will be identified by Pastor Jim in conjunction with the MCCI Team.

The **congregation will vote on this report** to either embrace or reject it in its entirety at an official **church conference** led by the district superintendent on **Sunday, March 5 at 10:15 a.m.**

If embraced by a **70% or more vote** of the official membership present, the MCCI will designate prescription coaches and team with Urbana UMC to implement these prescriptions.

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



Respectfully Submitted by:

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

Rev. Dr. Joseph Bishman, MCCI Consultant

Rev. Bill Lyle, Lead Pastor of Peace United Methodist Church, Pickerington, Ohio

Rev. Charliam Renner, Lead Pastor of First United Methodist Church, Sullivan, Illinois