



Missional Church Consultation Initiative

*Epworth United Methodist
Church*

Valley City, North Dakota

January 25, 2017



The Dakotas Conference MCCI Team would like to thank Pastor Dayne Zachrison and the paid and unpaid leadership of Epworth United Methodist Church for your hospitality on the MCCI Express Day, and for the privilege of teaming with you. Our prayer is that this report will help you maximize the impact and effectiveness of your congregation's fruitfulness in Christ.

*Epworth 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.

Epworth's **location** is ideal for missional engagement in the community. The attractive, remodeled and expanded **facility**, with full handicap accessibility and strategic location, is ideal for **current and future ministry opportunities**.

2. Willingness to Share.

The congregation willingly **shares its building with Valley City**, as illustrated by the way it invited Faith Lutheran to share space with Epworth for 18 months while Faith's church building was being rebuilt—an arrangement ending in February 2016. Other community groups, as well as the college, have enjoyed use of the well maintained Epworth facility.

3. Sunday Morning Messages.

Pastor Dayne's **preaching** is a strength. His ability to deliver sermons during weekly worship, together with his talent for **teaching** classes and Bible studies, is a clear asset for Epworth's spiritual growth. This strength was recognized by adults and youth alike.

4. Missional Opportunities within the Community.

Missional opportunities within Valley City are numerous. Valley City State University, the new Wellness Center, Washington Elementary, new Americans making this community their home and numerous single-parent families are just a few possible targets for outreach that were identified in 2016 by Epworth's Vision Research Teams.

Concerns

1. Need for Better Delegation, Organization and Communication.

A frequent concern expressed by leaders and members was that **important decisions and new ideas** are not always adequately **communicated**, and that staff members do not always **recruit and delegate** ministry work to more and different volunteers who would enjoy serving, the staff members instead doing the work themselves. Many also commented that **better and timelier pre-planning** would help ensure the effectiveness of church events and activities.



2. Shortage of Congregation-Wide Spiritual Growth Opportunities.

The MCCI team heard concern expressed that while the short-term “Circlemaker” study groups were well received, there is currently no plan to **offer the congregation another round of spiritual growth small groups now that they have ended.**

3. No Significant “Signature Ministry” in Valley City.

While the Epworth congregation has enjoyed serving various local mission efforts over many years, at the present time the church has **no signature ministry in the community** for which it is widely known, and in which every ministry and group in the church participates in a united effort to impact the community with the love and message of Jesus.

4. Desire to Connect with the Churchless in the Community.

Many persons told the MCCI Team that there is definitely desire within the congregation to **connect and build invitational and hospitable relationships with those who are churchless** in the church’s “mission field,” but that Epworth UMC lacks the strategy or skills to know how that should effectively be accomplished on an ongoing basis.

Prescriptions

1. Leadership.

Upon acceptance of this report, the following steps will be taken to ensure that **all levels of leadership at Epworth** will effectively address the priorities of communication, delegation and organization.

- **Pastor Dayne** will continue the work with his **leadership coach** for the next 18 months, sharpening his skills and applying them consistently (the cost for this will be shared by the church, the district and the MCCI).
- The district superintendent will identify a team of three lay leaders in the church to become a collaborative **Advance Team** that will partner with Pastor Dayne in ongoing matters of strategy, communication, delegation and organization. Together he and they will create accountability, construct timelines and define priorities in these areas. An immediate responsibility of the Advance Team will be to work with Pastor Dayne on **accomplishing the important work of these prescriptions** by constituting and coordinating the various work teams needed. The new Advance Team will be functioning by or before **April 2017**.
- The district superintendent will meet with the administrative council and the pastor to assess and refine the church’s administrative infrastructure so that it provides the congregation a successful framework for functioning. The district superintendent’s recommendations will be implemented by or before **winter 2017**.
 - So that the church may gain momentum making connections with newcomers when “splashing” the community with outreach events like the French Toast Breakfast, the Corn Feed and other similar efforts, the MCCI will provide all Epworth leadership (including staff, the administrative council, the new Advance Team, and committee chairs) with two hours of training on the **“Triad”** approach to planning each



“splash” event, which emphasizes at least two follow-up activities that give newcomers a reason to return. The “Triad” training will be scheduled by or before **June 2017**. After the training, the pastor and Advance Team will ensure that every major church event from then on implements the Triad format.

2. Spiritual Growth.

So that the Epworth church family can continue to grow in discipleship, **each spring and fall for the next two years** Pastor Dayne will select a book or resource that he believes will challenge and encourage the spiritual growth of the congregation. The book chosen will be used for a **4- to 6-week churchwide study** undertaken by **every existing class and small group** and the **youth ministry**, and will be adapted for use in the **children’s ministry**. **New, short-term small study groups** led by church council members will also be offered for those not in an existing class or small group, the goal being that at least **80% of the congregation** participates. Each time, Pastor Dayne will also provide a **sermon series** on the book’s theme to support the churchwide study, thereby providing spiritual leadership as the church family grows and matures in faith together.

To help the congregation continue to actively seek God possibilities and open hearts to God’s dreams for Epworth and its community, Pastor Dayne will continue to lead the **Breakthrough Prayer Initiative** in new and creative ways. This will help continually provide the spiritual “fuel” for the church’s sacred journey of change and growth.

Pastor Dayne will also assume spiritual responsibility for **discipling the administrative council and the staff at each of their meetings**, so that the church’s leadership will stay vital and growing in faithfulness to Christ, regularly praying together for God’s guidance and wisdom.

3. Signature Ministry: “We Love Washington School.”

Upon acceptance of this report, the pastor (with strategic input from the Advance Team) will cast vision for an all-church **partnership of service and love** with the nearby **Washington School’s faculty and students** in order to establish a powerful, high-impact ministry in Valley City for which the church will be known. By or before **April 2017** the following steps will have been launched.

- A **“We Love Washington School” Team** will be assembled by Pastor Dayne and the Advance Team. Its purpose will be to meet with the Washington School principal and leadership to identify the many ways in which Epworth might be able to support, bless and assist the school—the faculty, its students and their families-- ongoing. A list of possibilities will be developed and provided to the congregation.
- Every **established class, group, ministry and committee** (including youth and children) of Epworth will identify from the list how it will partner with, support and serve the students and faculty of Washington School starting with the **school year in fall 2017**. The “We Love Washington School” Team will coordinate and bring accountability to the overall church effort, will collect stories and feedback and will continue to communicate with the Washington School leadership to ensure that the church is an outstanding “neighbor” to the school, praying for, encouraging, serving and supporting the education and nurture of the students (and their families) to the fullest extent possible. One idea is to provide church members with “We Love Washington School” tee shirts, to be worn whenever members are serving at the school, hosting events for parents and children, etc.
- A new **Vision Feasibility Team** will be assembled by Pastor Dayne and the Advance Team that will include Jackie Owen and Matt Nielson (if available) and others who are passionate about developing an excellent and professional **after-school program for students** in the Epworth classroom space—a need already identified in the church’s community. The Vision Feasibility Team will do research and develop a



plan, budget, timeline, list of staff needs, etc. for the program's potential establishment. Special attention will be given to exploring a partnership with Valley City State University students who could intern as part of the after-school program or other programs, and to how the after-school program will proactively connect with students' families and invite them into relationships with the congregation. The Vision Feasibility Team will bring its plans and proposal to the administrative council and Board of Trustees/Endowment for review and approval by **summer 2017** in order to implement and launch the program by **fall 2017 or January 2018** (or the soonest appropriate target date).

4. Radical Welcome, and Relevance to the Community.

To ensure that every guest who sets foot in the church building is warmly welcomed both before and after worship (or any other church activity) and receives consistent and effective follow-up, Pastor Dayne and the Advance Team will assemble a **Radical Welcome Team** by or before **May 2017**. A prescription coach will be provided to help this new team create and implement the new welcome systems, and to provide additional training to usher and greeter teams. The prescription coach will also give guidance to the Radical Welcome Team on how to ensure that the building looks **guest-ready** both inside and curbside. The new systems will be in place, training will be completed and guest-readiness "tidy-up" inside and out will be done by or before **Advent 2017** at the latest.

So that Epworth can continue to improve and take its Sunday worship to the next level, a **worship enhancement prescription coach** will be provided to coach and guide all those involved in the Sunday worship service so that every element in worship—including the time before worship begins and after worship ends—feels user-friendly to guests and to those who have little church experience. The work with this prescription coach will be complete by or before **Advent 2017**.

Finally, upon acceptance of this report the following steps will start being taken by or before **June 2017** to help Epworth connect with its community by taking advantage of the **prominent and strategic location** of the Epworth church facility and the vast number of persons in Valley City who appreciate a great cup of coffee:

- Pastor Dayne and the Advance Team will help assemble a "**Coffee Church**" **Kiosk Task Force** led by Mike Watterson. This team will research city regulations and zoning with a view to potentially purchasing or constructing a **drive-through coffee kiosk** with professional appearance and signage in the church's parking lot. The team will also research sources of outstanding coffee beans and the equipment and supplies needed for the kiosk. The team will create a staffing proposal with a proposed staffing budget, estimate overall startup costs, develop a timeline, and plan **specific ways that the coffee kiosk could help Epworth connect customers** into church activities, worship and the life of the congregation.
- When all of this is complete, Mike and the "Coffee Church" Kiosk Task Force will bring their **budget, timeline and proposal** to the administrative council and Board of Trustees/Endowment, who will review the proposal, approve it and then establish adequate startup funding for this community connection initiative.
- Work will begin following approval, the goal being to use Epworth's corner location and ample parking lot as a means to **becoming known in the Valley City community as the church with great coffee**—and for the **primary purpose** of providing Epworth an **ongoing way to connect with and invite new people** via the coffee kiosk connection.



Addendum

After the Epworth congregation has made significant progress on the above four prescriptions and new “fruitfulness” evidence has begun to emerge from each, with the district superintendent’s approval Pastor Dayne and the Advance Team may contact the MCCI to request a prescription coach whose guidance will help explore and develop a **potential additional worship service** on a day other than Sunday, in order to reach a new, different segment of the Valley City population.

Immediate Governance Decision Steps

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

1. **Thursday, February 9 at 7 p.m.**
2. **Sunday, February 12 at 11:30 a.m.**
3. **Wednesday, February 22 at 6 p.m.**

Facilitators for these Town Hall Meetings will be identified by Pastor Dayne 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 11:30 a.m.**

If embraced by a **75% or more vote** of the official membership present, the MCCI will designate prescription coaches and team with Epworth 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. Kermit Culver, Sakakawea District Superintendent