

About VCI

VCI is a process of renewal for growing healthy, vital, fruitful, missional congregations in the Michigan Area of The UMC. VCI offers our pastors and congregations a better future by providing hope to leaders who have lost their outward focus. VCI prepares them for systemic change that will enable them to once again answer God's call to reach out to new people with the Good News.

The overarching expectations are to be:

- Christ-Centered
- Accountable
- Fruitful
- Collaborative

The process includes:

- Developing a new vision and strategy for communication and implementation
- Motivating congregations to embrace a new vision and mission
- Developing resources, ideas and personnel to prepare for change
- Embracing and implementing change
- Providing new tools and training to be the church for the 21st century

A trained coach will walk along with the congregation as it works to fulfill the prescriptions from the consultation report. Systemic change occurs as a result of hard work; the gain far outweighs the pain. Once change has begun, a whole new world of opportunity opens up. Once again the congregation and pastor can enjoy the fruit of being an outwardly focused church bringing new people to Christ.

The goal is to equip leaders to lead a congregation directly into God's mission field.

The VCI Process

PHASE I: Shared Learning Experience

The church establishes a team that includes the pastor and 2-5 laity, and meets with teams from other nearby churches. These 9 Saturday Learning Sessions will help your team learn key concepts and best practices, tapping into the discoveries of other effective churches and leaders. As a result the church will develop a cadre of leaders to help it more effectively carry out its mission and become more fruitful.

All sessions are 5 hours long with each session consisting of teaching, spiritual reflection, interaction with the ideas and concepts and group sharing. Participants read a book each month pertaining to each session's topic.

Once Phase I is completed, the VCI facilitator, staff, coach and District Superintendent will discern who will be invited to be part of Phase II.

Phase II: Self Study and Consultation Event

Phase II is a 2 to 6 month process culminating in the Consultation Event. Prior to the Consultation Event a team of trained pastors and lay persons review documents about the congregation. During the event the team determines strengths, concerns and prescriptions (strategic recommendations) for the church to pursue in order to move to even greater effectiveness. Smaller Churches receive 3 and Larger Churches receive 5 strengths, concerns and prescriptions. During the preparation and consultation event process, the church leaders complete documents

and reports and participate in a pre-consultation workshop. The pastor will be part of a peer mentoring group with other participating pastors. The Consultation Event continues the momentum for healthy change in the congregation. During the 4-6 weeks following the Consultation Event, the congregation will hold 2 or 3 town hall meetings to decide whether to accept or reject the consultation report, including its prescriptions. This decision is finalized in a called church conference.

PHASE III: Implementation of Prescriptions

Each congregation voting 'yes' to the consultation report and its prescriptions will be assigned a coach to help with implementing the prescriptions. The peer mentoring for the pastor continues.

