

WILSON MEMORIAL CHURCH

OUR FAITH JOURNEY INTO 2022 MISSION STUDY

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mary E. Wilson Memorial Union Church is an interdenominational faith community founded upon the worship of God in the mainline Christian tradition.

We express our faith in an intentionally diverse community where people of many worship traditions, backgrounds, and personhood can feel a sense of belonging and purpose.

Our commitment to meeting the real needs of people and making room for every generation has helped Wilson continue to be a light in our world for over a century and will lead us through the next.

Our Commitment

A church thrives best when we are aware of who we are as a community and focus on our unique callings. This mission study has revealed several strengths that we value and will continue to invest and expand in.

RELEVANT WORSHIP

Diverse and relevant worship rooted in our Christian tradition but open to other expressions of worship to be included.

NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

A commitment to identifying and addressing the physical needs of people in our community and surrounding communities through food help or other tangible needs.

GENERATIONS OF WILSON

Welcome of incoming generations while treasuring the wisdom and contribution of long time members.

INCLUSIVITY

A commitment to the inclusion of a wide range of human expression that goes beyond “tolerance” but values sincere listening and understanding through the lens of the teachings of Jesus.

SUPPORT OF STAFF

Staff that are a treasured part of our church family.

ONLINE SERVICES

Our commitment to extending worship to remote worshippers and learners through available technological tools.

Our Transitions

CULTURE

We have experienced great cultural shifts since our last mission study (20/20vision).

Areas of “shift” that we have felt include:

- The schedule and demands of family life, including the challenge of getting to places at a prescribed time and place consistently has affected church services and events.
- The way people socialize and learn online has radically changed as social media and other resources are literally in the palm of people’s hands.
- A result of social media has made us more aware of the continued racial, sexual, and gender-based violence that is deeply embedded in our nation.
- COVID-19 radically altered us in every way. Social crisis’ such as mental health, economic disparity, and physical health have forced us to rethink our approach to many things we relied on.
- There is a greater awareness of political divides which have become deep and bitter, morphing from policy debates into culture wars with increased instances of political violence in the United States.

Our Transitions

CHURCH LIFE

- Retirement of long-time pastor, Rev. Barbara Peters
- Retirement of long-time choir director, James Musacchio
- Retirement of long-time church secretary, Karen Shemansky
- Inability to maintain a traditional choir due to lack of membership
- Promotion of Rev. Michael Droege from Associate Minister to Acting Pastor
- Hire of new Director of Music and Worship Arts, Timothy Walton
- Hire of new Administrative Assistant in the office after several short-term hires. Tina Kelly began in Jan 2022
- Hire of technology expert, Jacob Feldman
- Added online worship services, creating an online worship community.

Who We Are Today

CHURCH WITH HISTORIC ROOTS IN WATCHUNG

This is a reality of Wilson Memorial Church that we are proud of and we draw upon as we consider our calling in each generation. While the adage “Change is the only Constant” has proven to be true again in the last couple of years, it is our deep rooted traditions that keep us standing. We look to those roots of being a true community church that matters to our community to help guide our policies, involvements, and decisions. As an interdenominational church, we seek to include strengths of many denominations.

WIDE WELCOME

We seek to be a representative of the Kingdom of God by the diversity of our congregation and leadership. We continue to try to understand what it means to be hospitable and to make space for new generations, new cultures, and new ideas while holding true to the teachings of Jesus.

FAMILIES AND YOUTH

For over a century, Wilson has proven itself to be committed to supporting the emerging generation. We have demonstrated that commitment and continue to do so by exploring how to serve families the best we can into the 21st century. In the decade of 2020, we continue to focus on learning how to integrate and root the young into our church life.

Who We Are Today

MUSIC

We continue our commitment to musical excellence as worship by working to make sure there are entry points for every worshipper to connect musically at some point in our worship services. Music directors are called to help congregations worship with music and to understand the styles of music that connect our diverse community.

TECHNOLOGY

We have become a far more technical church than we were before the pandemic. We installed a camera, improved our audio capabilities, and created a technology position to expand our work. We are determined to develop a greater sense of community with those who worship online.

Our Action Items

The congregation was also polled around areas they are either praying for or strengths to be developed that could become areas of focus for the board and/or pastoral staff.

This includes:

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Providing educational opportunities and expansion of children's programs

COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Expanding our ministry to those in economic or physical need.
- Deepening opportunities to “love one another” and “love our neighbor as ourselves” through community-building experiences.

Our Action Items

GENERATIONAL PLANNING

Strategic planning that allows us to position Wilson for future generations.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE GOALS

“Right-sizing” our committee and board structures to fit our congregation and vision.

CONGREGATION STRUCTURE

Clarifying what it means to be interdenominational and independent vs. being part of a larger denomination.

ELDERS ARE CHERISHED

Ensuring our seniors remain connected to services and identifying resources needed for their connection.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Increase our public relations strategies with resources such as the Frippery or other offerings of wide community interest.
- Expanding our ministry within the community as a center of town life.
- Review list of Wilson’s ministries and community programs and determine which will be supported moving forward.

PASTORAL ROLE

Review the Pastoral role and expectations in light of mission goals.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Create strategies that balance and develop both our online and in-person communities.

VISION STATEMENT

For generations, Wilson Memorial Church has sought to be the “Light on the Hill” spreading welcome and love to its members, the surrounding communities and beyond. Continuing that intention in the 21st century, Wilson seeks to expand its outreach missions by reimagining and revitalizing our space to allow for more opportunities for community involvement and service.

Our recent Mission Study included here, revealed our congregation’s desire to expand our ministry to those in economic or physical need, as well as, increasing our outreach to the community, as a center of town life. Possible programs include educational opportunities for children and adults, cultural activities, nutritional aid and food security for those in need, wellness programs, spiritual programs and other activities.

In order to achieve these goals we envision the development of the Wilson Memorial Outreach Wing. The current layout of the building is conducive to developing that vision in the area of the education wing and Blackburn Hall provided that the space be physically renovated to meet current comfort and safety standards.

While the Executive Board has begun basic renovations, we are faced with significant financial challenges to complete this vision.

Funding is necessary to support the following proposed projects:

- Renovation of Blackburn Hall, to make it appropriate for various community outreach programs.
- Upgrading of kitchen facilities
- Upgrading of bathroom facilities
- Addition of an elevator for accessibility
- Creation of appropriate storage
- Improvement of church grounds such as the Kindness Trail and other open spaces to allow for better availability for community outreach.

Projects currently underway in support of the safety and general welfare of the whole church facility include:

- Drainage project at the manse
- Replacement of the roof on the administration wing
- Upkeep of windows in the Sanctuary and Fisher Hall

The completion of our vision will require significant funding. The Executive Board is in the process of developing details of a Capital Campaign through which we will seek your support.

Through prayerful consideration and faith in our vision, we will succeed in our task.

Please begin to consider your role in this vision as details emerge.