



March 7, 2019

Dear Members and Friends of Community United Methodist Church,

We've experienced another Holy Spirit breakthrough! The Signature Ministry Discernment Team, one of the Missional Church Consultation Initiative (MCCI) implementation teams, is pleased to share with you that we have identified the ministry we believe God is calling our congregation to embrace as our signature ministry to the larger community.

The primary objective of the Signature Ministry Discernment Team has been to identify a new or existing ministry with an outward and missional focus that involves the entire congregation. The prescribed goal for our church through this ministry is to facilitate CUMC becoming known as the church with a major ministry focus demonstrating the love of Christ and building relationships through in-person, hands-on investment. This ministry is to place emphasis on the body of our congregation actively practicing our vision, *to be the church who says "Yes" to loving and feeding our community in body and spirit*. Your participation in this ministry will help us further live into our mission to *make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world*.

The team actively began collecting and analyzing data (e.g. area needs assessment data from hospitals and Wright and Sherburne County social services, area census and demographic data, etc.) and considering possible ministries that could meet specific, identified needs in our local communities. Part of this process included a congregational survey of presumed community needs and priorities. Throughout the process, the team continued to come back to the overriding theme for which our church has largely been known throughout its 160+-year history: education and educational support to the greater Monticello community.

In late 2018, the team decided to focus efforts on the possibility of church/school partnerships. This led to interviews with school staff and/or administrators at Eastview Education Center, Pinewood and Little Mountain Elementary Schools, Monticello Middle School, Monticello High School and even the Superintendent of Schools in Monticello, for the purpose of gathering data about specific needs within the Monticello Public School District that was then used to help the team chart a direction for moving forward.

During its January 2019 meeting, the team settled on a plan to involve an initial pilot school partnership project with Little Mountain Elementary School (LME), while also defining a 5+-year plan that involves short, medium, and long-range strategic objectives to benefit the students and staff of LME and other schools within the District. The Ad Council approved the Signature Ministry proposal at its 2/27 meeting.

The Team's next step is to meet with personnel from LME and identify a list of specific needs. We will use this list to develop a volunteer opportunity list for the first of what we envision will become several "dream teams." Through this exciting new ministry, we will prayerfully be a part of "bringing dreams to life."

Please stay tuned for further notices from the Signature Ministry Team about how we can become more active in meeting the needs of our area children and youth. If you have questions about this exciting new service endeavor; feel free to reach out to anyone on the team.

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Members: Kay Walker, Bryan Tungland, Tom Hanson, Jacque Gordon, Pastor Carrie Binnie, Allison Martin