



Missional Church Consultation Initiative

*Cargill United Methodist
Church*

Janesville, Wisconsin

October 2, 2023



*The Wisconsin Conference MCCI Team would like to thank Pastor Steve Scott and the leadership of Cargill United Methodist Church, Janesville, Wisconsin for the hospitality on your MCCI Express Day and for the privilege of teaming with you. Our prayer is that God will use this prayer-fueled process to focus and maximize your congregation's fruitfulness for Christ. Your church embodies resources and **strengths** ideally suited for next-level transformational ministry, as well as **concerns** that need to be addressed in order for the church to move forward.*

Strengths

1. Facility and Location.

Repeatedly during the MCCI Express Day and evening, members and leaders affirmed the wonderful asset of the **church building (plus its grounds and strategic location)** as an outstanding strength of this congregation. With **plenty of space** for additional worship service attendees and new ministry activities, a growing number of parents with children proliferating through the church's surrounding "mission field" as well as an increasing population of those ages 65 plus, and even several schools within a one-mile radius of the facility, Cargill UMC is situated for **dramatic additional potential impact** on behalf of the message and mission of Christ.

2. People.

Leaders and members recognized **Pastors Steve and Amy** as a strength of this church: their leadership, preaching, and pastoral shepherding. All the **dedicated staff** at Cargill UMC are deeply appreciated. A tireless **core of volunteer leaders** invests hours each week to ensure the church's organization and tasks are cared for with excellence. The congregation itself described its own membership as **warm and welcoming to all**, willing to step up with support and care whenever a need arises—even **having become like "family"** to many who described their experiences to the MCCI team.

3. Financial Stability and Generosity.

The MCCI Team heard many affirm the strength that, thanks to the **Cargill Foundation**, the congregation has **maintained financial stability** and **underwritten additional staff positions** -- even through recent years when COVID and other "ups and downs" have affected church attendance and subsequent general church giving. The generous **"special project giving"** of the congregation, shown by relatively quick debt retirement of the last two capital campaigns for building improvements, reflects the membership's desire to financially invest in Cargill's future.

4. Music Ministry.

Cargill UMC's long history of **excellent, inspiring music ministry** was mentioned repeatedly as a strength of this church. Thanks to the leadership of director of music **Richard Severing**, choral director **Marie Severing**, 10:30 a.m. contemporary service worship leader **Brittney Mansur**, numerous **part time worship and music staff, keyboardists**, and **church members** who contribute their talents in choirs and other musical opportunities, the congregation continues to be blessed and spiritually inspired.



5. Cargill Christian Learning Center.

Since its start in 1983, Cargill UMC's community outreach ministry with children has grown, changed, and become established as today's **Cargill Christian Learning Center** – the church's premier "**signature ministry**" in Janesville. The daycare/preschool now includes 25 staff members, 107 students ages six weeks to grade 5, and a before/after school program. Members, leaders and staff of Cargill UMC named the Learning Center as a longtime strength.

Concerns

1. Need for Broader Volunteer Engagement.

Cargill UMC leaders and members are grateful for the outstanding core of volunteer leaders who serve ongoing with excellence, yet also expressed concern about **the deep need for an increasing number of church attendees to likewise identify their unique gifts and passions to serve, and to step forward.**

2. Mostly Missing Generation.

Cargill UMC has a long history of placing **value and priority upon discipling, raising up and sending out young "world changers" for Christ** – many of whom have sensed God's call into vocational ministry over the last several decades. During the MCCI Express Day and evening, however, leaders and members expressed concern that at present, **this younger generation and their parents are largely missing from the congregation.**

3. Facility Updates--Questions.

Throughout the MCCI Express daytime and evening, the MCCI Team heard indecisive concern from many about **whether the church's facility needs additional remodel updates, possible realignment of space usage and location of staff offices, redesign of the west entrance for user-friendliness to newcomers, and other potential facility improvement questions.** However, according to those who spoke with the MCCI Team, right now Cargill **does not have a systematic, collaborative, prayer-saturated process in place** to seriously consider and discern decisions on these various strategic facility questions in order to then clarify and strategize a course of action forward on any of them (or not).

4. Adult Discipleship: Newcomer Connection Points.

Though a number of ongoing small groups and activity gatherings are in place at Cargill UMC and periodic short-term Bible studies are offered, the MCCI Team heard a concern that at this time, **no easy-access process exists that offers ongoing connection for adults (newcomers or church members) into new small group friendships.**



5. How to Befriend the Unchurched.

Cargill UMC attendees told the MCCI team they are pleased to offer multiple outreach events and activities to the Janesville community, including the annual Living Nativity, the Bountiful Blessings dinner, and other efforts. However, the team also heard a concern that though guests come to the church's events, most do not become part of the congregation. Leaders and members spoke of **needing additional skills to learn how to actually make friends with the unchurched that will engage them into further involvement with the church family.**

Next Steps: Prescriptions

1. Igniting Volunteerism: *Dynamite Prayer*.

In response to the concern the MCCI team heard about Cargill UMC's need to broaden volunteerism, upon acceptance of this report the pastors and church council will constitute a new ***Dynamite Prayer Support Team*** by or before **January 2024**.

This team will partner with **Pastor Amy** plus an **MCCI prescription coach** to schedule and fuel a congregation-wide ***Dynamite Prayer 28-Day Experiment*** in either **February 2024** or during **Lent 2024**. The purpose of the 28 days of personal devotional/breakthrough prayer is to give everyone the opportunity to pray, listen, discern and name what next step God is stirring at the personal, individual heart level as well as at the church level—and then to step up to serve the ministry of Christ in your own unique way.

The *Dynamite Prayer 28 Day Experiment* across the congregation will include use of this personal breakthrough prayer daily devotional resource, which the church will provide for everyone. The pastors will design a **companion 4-week sermon series**. Pastor Amy and the *Dynamite Prayer* Support Team will also have the option to receive coaching on potentially scheduling and orchestrating a **congregation-wide supper/*Dynamite Prayer* "discussion circles" lunch or evening** for each of the 4 weeks. (Cargill UMC will be provided a 50% discount code to order and purchase the books).

Upon concluding the 28-Day Experiment, the prescription coach will have equipped and prepared the pastors and the *Dynamite Prayer* Support Team to schedule a "grand finale" **LEAD Night**. This will be an occasion at which the **entire congregation will come together** in celebratory fashion to share what **ideas and dreams for next "God steps"** each has discerned during the 28 days of personal breakthrough prayer, and have opportunity to collaborate together on how the ideas might be synergistic with one another to "step out of the boat" -- as everyone leans into bringing additional new volunteer energy and momentum to and through Cargill UMC.

Pastor Amy and the *Dynamite Prayer* Support team will take responsibility afterwards for an immediate strategy to support and deploy individuals into their new ideas for serving, as a crucial aspect of Cargill's overall discipleship ministry. The goal will be to see Cargill UMC advance to a churchwide culture of increasing numbers of persons prayerfully dreaming forward, serving Christ out of their own unique call and giftedness.



2. Next Generation: Clarifying a Path Forward.

This prescription is in response to the expressed concern to the MCCI Team that despite the longtime priority of children's and youth ministries at Cargill UMC, the congregation is now **largely missing this younger generation**.

Upon acceptance of this report, by or before **Spring 2024** the pastors and church council will identify a **Next Generation Exploratory Team** that will include several current volunteers serving in these ministry areas as well as several additional persons (to add "fresh eyes"). This team will partner with a **Next Generation Ministries Assessment prescription coach** for the purpose of **carefully assessing** Cargill's existing children's and youth ministry efforts and also **recommending** new potential next steps forward.

The prescription coach will be scheduled by Pastor Steve to come on site at Cargill UMC, review the spaces in the building presently used for children's and youth ministries, and meet with the Exploratory Team as well as have interviews with the pastors and designated others.

The prescription coach will then prepare a **Next Generation Ministries Assessment report** with observations and recommendations. The assessment report will be delivered by the prescription coach to the church council and Pastor Steve for consideration of possible decisions to act on the recommendations, plus allocate any needed resources. If decisions to act are affirmed, the prescription coach will be continued alongside Cargill UMC to coach, train and guide implementation.

3. *Decide*: Step(s) of Faith.

In response to the congregation's concerns the MCCI Team heard about indecisiveness whether the church's facility needs additional refresh/remodel updates, possible realignment of space usage and location of staff offices, redesign of the west entrance for user-friendliness to newcomers, or other potential facility improvement questions, upon acceptance of this report a small "**Decide**" Team of church leaders will be assembled by Pastor Steve and the church council by or before **April 2024**.

Assisted and guided by a prescription coach, the "**Decide**" Team's **responsibilities** will be to lead the following prayer-saturated strategic efforts.

1. The "Decide" Team will research (or identify additional sub-teams to research) **needs, strategy, ideas and potential plans to enhance and upgrade the current church facility to expand overall capacity** for welcome of newcomers, discipleship, ministry with children and families, community outreach activities and other needs. Surrounding "mission field" demographics, costs, potential space changes, possible need for a capital campaign, a timeline, and all other necessary details will be considered.
2. **Congregational listening sessions** for prayer, suggestions and discernment will assist the "Decide" Team (and subcommittees) with input on their work.
3. A proposal with recommendation(s) will be completed and presented to the church council for potential decision(s) by or before **December 2024, or latest January 2025**.



NOTE: At any point, options being researched by the “Decide” Team **may be set aside** if it becomes clear there is a lack of feasibility or that they would be unwise or not strategic at this time. Any such decision will be well communicated to the congregation to keep everyone fully informed.

4. Once a decision(s) is/are made, the MCCI will provide one or more prescription coaches (if requested) to help guide Pastor Steve and church leadership in **moving forward** with the appropriate action plans for whatever facility plans are officially decided, unless no facility improvement options are decided upon and Cargill continues as is.

4. Newcomer Connections: “First Friends” Groups.

This prescription is in response to the expressed congregational concern that at this time, no easy-access process exists that offers **ongoing connections** for adults (newcomers or church members) into new small group friendships and thus stronger congregational belonging.

Upon acceptance of this report, by or before **August 2024** the pastors and church council will identify a “**First Friends**” Team to implement a “**First Friends**” initiative. This MCCI-designed initiative will provide a system that quickly connects newcomers (or interested church members) into **new, short-term small groups** so they can form friendships with others like themselves. This will add another element to Cargill UMC’s **discipleship strategy**. Finding initial friendships within the congregation is a crucial step for assimilation into congregational life, and church researchers report that if a newcomer makes at least five friends in a congregation, he or she will likely never leave.

An **MCCI prescription coach** will train and equip Pastor Amy and the First Friends Team. The new “First Friends” initiative will be operative and ongoing by or before **Advent 2024**.

5. New Skills: Befriending the Unchurched.

Cargill UMC attendees told the MCCI team they are pleased to offer multiple outreach events and activities to the Janesville community, but that often those who come to the church’s special events do not return. In response to the expressed concern that the congregation needs additional skills to learn how to actually build relationships with the unchurched that engage them into involvement with the congregation, upon acceptance of this report the MCCI will support the following.

1. By or before **May 2024**, the pastors and church council will assemble a **Welcome the Neighborhood** Team that will partner with an MCCI prescription coach who specializes in the “Dinner Church” strategy for connecting with unchurched families and individuals for belonging and faith.

This coach will come on site at Cargill UMC to provide training for the Welcome the Neighborhood Team, as well as the volunteers for the Bountiful Blessings meal and other existing church outreach events. The training will provide applicable learning plus a forum for dreaming and designing a potential new weekly meal-based venue at Cargill UMC (or enhancements to the format and frequency of the Bountiful Blessings meal) that will be both invitational and relationship-bridge building for the church’s neighborhood demographic into the loving community of faith the congregation itself already



enjoys. The “Dinner Church” prescription coach will continue alongside Cargill UMC until implementation is accomplished.

2. So that the general core practices of **practical, effective welcoming and befriending hospitality** for visitors are improved and then deployed throughout all existing aspects of Cargill UMC especially **around both live and online worship**, the MCCI will provide another prescription coach who will provide next-level training for the church’s hospitality teams that support all current worship services. This will be scheduled to occur at a **date to be specified** by Pastor Steve.

ADDENDUM

The following is not a prescription included in Cargill UMC’s official church conference vote to accept this report. Rather, it is an option offered by the MCCI, if the vote is positive.

Upon acceptance of this report, the MCCI will provide an **executive leadership coach** for Pastor Steve to continue to add to his senior pastor skills leading Cargill UMC as it grows in size and complexity, and as the church expands its outreach.

Immediate Governance Decision Steps

The congregation will hold the following **Town Hall Meetings** in the Sanctuary within the next 30 days to discuss these prescriptions:

1. **Wednesday, October 11 at 6:30 p.m.**
2. **Wednesday, October 18 at 1:00 p.m.**
3. **Sunday, October 22 at 11:45 a.m.**

Facilitators for these Town Hall Meetings will be identified by Pastor Steve in conjunction with the church’s MCCI team.

The **congregation will vote on this report** to either embrace it or reject it at an official **church conference** led by the district superintendent on **Thursday, November 2 at 6:30 p.m.**

If embraced by a **75% or more vote** of the official membership present, the MCCI Team will designate prescription coaches and team with Cargill UMC to implement these prescriptions.

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



Report Respectfully Submitted by:

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Rev. Scott Carlson, Director of Congregational Development, Wisconsin Conference

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Rev. Jason Mahnke, Director of Programming and Campaigns, Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation

Rev. Lori Lossie, Lead Pastor of Still Waters United Methodist Church, Jackson, Wisconsin

Rev. Cindy Thompson, Lead Pastor of St. Luke United Methodist Church, Sheboygan, Wisconsin

Rev. Ben Morris, Pastor of Emmanuel UMC and St. James UMC, Appleton, Wisconsin

Rev. Ebenezer Insor, South East District Superintendent of the Wisconsin Conference