

Two Rivers UMC

Rock Island, IL

October 12-14, 2018



STEP TO THE
NEXT LEVEL

 Illinois Great Rivers Conference
of The United Methodist Church



The Illinois Great Rivers Conference (IGRC) Step UP Team would like to thank Pastor Robb McCoy and the paid and unpaid leadership of Two Rivers UMC for your hospitality this weekend and for the privilege of teaming up with you. Our prayer has been that God will use this process to focus and maximize the potential of your congregation for fruitfulness for Christ. Two Rivers has much to celebrate. God has entrusted you with numerous resources and strengths preparing you to Step UP into transformational ministry. God has also revealed some concerns that need to be addressed for the church to move forward.

Strengths

1. Dedication

Two Rivers is led by a core of dedicated volunteers and staff who spearhead significant ministry. Many have shown years of dedication to congregational leadership. The congregation feels that Pastor Robb is a great match and expresses confidence in his ability to lead the church into the future.

2. Diversity

Two Rivers is a congregation which welcomes all people to discover this church as a home and to engage in its ministries. In the past few years, several African immigrants have become a part of Two Rivers UMC. Their enthusiastic faith has brought new life and energy to the church.

3. Community Ministry

Many different ministries of the congregation engage people of the Rock Island community. The church offers many ministries to meet needs of the community, such as the Meal Site, Safety Net, and Coat ministries. In addition, Two Rivers offers several events to connect with the community, such as Bless the Block, Trunk or Treat, and Lenten Concerts.





Newcomer Welcome

Although not fully named and claimed in the interviews or focus groups, this is a strength of the church. The seven “mystery worshipers” expressed appreciation for the warm welcome they received. This is significant and outside the norm. Claim it, encourage it, celebrate it, and repeat it!

Concerns

1. Aging

There is significant concern that the members and leaders of Two Rivers UMC are aging. It was stated that fifteen to twenty years ago a significant number of young adults left the church, creating a “generation gap.” Another observation is that the same core leaders have served for many years. Those who prepared the self-study document estimated the average age of active members and participants to be 66 years-old.

2. Unclear Results

The church is not seeing the results it would like, especially from its community ministries. When questioned what the desired results would be, the typical response related to worship participation and other engagement in the ongoing ministries of the church. Unfortunately, there is not a direct correlation between the community ministries and the measurable results expected, leading to lack of clarity. As the church has added more ministries, the impact has become unfocused and diluted.

3. Cultural Barriers

When a church begins to reach people from differing cultures, there are natural barriers to communication and deep relationships. That is the experience of Two Rivers UMC. With English being the second language for some participants, it limits their ability to fully engage. They further experience differences in worship, food, and other ways. The church has been blessed with the opportunity to experience some aspects of African worship and culture. Current practice limits full engagement.



Vital Next Steps

1. Focus

In aligning its efforts, Two Rivers can increase results. This will require identifying some activities to pause or stop and realigning other ministries to work in unity for Kingdom impact.

- Upon acceptance of this report, Pastor Robb will lead this church in its focus on God through ongoing and increased implementation of Revolutionary Prayer strategies.
- By **December 15, 2018**, the chair of Church Council, the Lay Leader, and Pastor Robb will recruit two other people to work with them to review a list of all ministries, the perceived life impact, and to bring recommendations to the Church Council no later than **March 31, 2019**, as to what ministries of the church should be discontinued, paused, and/or repurposed.
 - Working from the list of ministries named during the Resource Refocus event (with the addition of any ministries not named that day), Pastor Robb will develop a prayer list for the whole church to pray daily for the ministries throughout **January 2019**. Have one or two specific ministries placed on the prayer list each day. Ask the church to pray that God will grant wisdom to the team as they seek to make recommendations to focus the church's efforts.
 - Before making final decisions related to discontinuing, pausing, or repurposing of ministries, the team will consider how ministries can be aligned to implement the "three-step" movement outlined below.
- No new community ministries will be started without a "three-step" movement of individuals in following Christ and connecting to the church. The basic steps start with a final goal in mind (usually individual taking their next step in following Christ and connecting with the Church). The flow goes from Initial Contact at community ministry ("Splash") to Next Step ministry or relational engagement ("Big Push") to Deeper Connection or Commitment ("Main Event").
- By **March 1, 2019**, a Guest Connections Team of three people will be recruited by Pastor Robb to work with him to identify and implement guest connection strategies, moving people from first time guests to ongoing connection in the life and ministry of the church. Consider at least one person who is not currently in any leadership position and possibly one youth to serve on this team.



2. Increase Multicultural Momentum

The gift of diverse cultures is something upon which Two Rivers can build. By **April 1, 2019**, Pastor Robb will recruit a Multicultural Ministries Team of no less than four and no more than six people to recommend and lead strategies related to decreasing barriers and increasing ministry engagement of African immigrants. A minimum of half of the team must be African immigrants. Some specific areas of ministry which might be considered and encouraged include:

- Family-to-family connections.
- Apprentice for leadership (see next item).
- African worship with translation of the Pastor's message. If this is considered, the Step UP coach can recommend a pastor in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference who speaks Swahili and may be able to give some guidance and/or assistance in this ministry.

The Step UP Team is hesitant to give specific action items for this Vital Next Step, because of the necessity of any actions being culturally relevant.

3. Apprentice Emerging Leaders

To increase the leadership capacity of Two Rivers, recruit a three to five-person Leadership Apprentice Strategy Team by **May 1, 2019**. The role of this team is to develop and implement a plan to identify and equip potential, future leaders. It is recommended that at least one member of the team be an African immigrant.

Specific areas of focus for the strategy include:

- Identify current ministry leaders who have the capability to apprentice an emerging leader in a one-on-one relationship.
- Connect individuals with common ministry interests so emerging leaders can be apprenticed in an area of ministry about which they are passionate. One area of focus is Sunday school classes and Bible studies.
- By **November 1, 2019**, apprenticing should begin for at least three emerging leaders.
- Identify potential apprentices from high potential youth, young adults, and newer members.
- As a part of the new member process, implement a strategy of discovering the spiritual gifts, talents, and ministry passions of each new member.
- By **December 31, 2022**, 75% of all people who lead a ministry should be apprenticing an emerging leader.



Immediate Governance Decision Steps

The congregation will hold at least three **Town Hall Meetings** within the next 30 days to discuss Next Steps.

1. **Monday, October 15 @ 11:00 am in Epworth Hall**
2. **Thursday, November 1 @ 7:00 pm in Asbury Parlor**
3. **Sunday, November 11 @ 10:45 am in Epworth Hall**

Facilitators for these Town Hall Meetings will be identified by Pastor McCoy in conjunction with the guidelines provided to him.

The **congregation will vote** on this report to either accept or reject it at an official church conference led by district superintendent Rev. Steve Granadosin on **Sunday, November 18 at 4:30 pm** in the **Epworth Hall**. As per the United Methodist book of Discipline's rules, all who are official members of Two Rivers (on the church role) and are present may vote.

If this report is approved by a **70% or more vote** of the official membership present, the IGRC will designate Peggy Hisey, Associate Coordinator of Congregational Development, as a coach to encourage, resource, and provide accountability during the implementation of the Vital Next Steps.

If the Vital Next Steps are rejected, the IGRC Step UP partnership will cease.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Rev. Mike Crawford, Coordinator of Congregational Development

Peggy Hisey, Associate Coordinator of Congregational Development

Rev. Steve Granadosin, District Superintendent Spoon River District of the IGRC