

Amalgamation Steering Committee Report

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

After more than five years of joining together to worship, socialize and participate in each other's programs and events, a group of representatives from St. Andrews United Church ("SAUC") and Deer Park United Church ("DPUC"), Rev. Hillary, Rev. Tom, the chairs of each council, Jocelyn Gelinias of Deer Park and John Palmer of St. Andrew's as well as Richard Betts and Jan van Egteren (The Moving Forward group), met to talk about how our two communities of faith could work more closely together in the future. With the approval of both the SAUC and DPUC councils, this team held a series of "Moving Forward, Building the Future" workshops with members of the two congregations and an online survey in the last quarter of 2019 to get feedback from our members.

Building on the feedback received, the Moving Forward group looked at different options of how the two congregations could move forward together and in February 2020 recommended to the two councils that:

- ***That the two congregations agree to work towards the amalgamation of our two communities of faith into a single entity.***
- ***That a joint Deer Park United Church and St. Andrew's United Church Amalgamation Steering Committee be established as soon as possible and that both St. Andrew's and Deer Park appoint 5 people to the committee.***

Both of these recommendations were unanimously passed by both councils and the Amalgamation Steering Committee (ASC) was formed and had its first meeting on April 20, 2019. The members of the ASC as selected by the 2 councils are: Tom Melvin, Brenda McKellar (alternate for Hillary Van Spronsen while she is on parental leave) John Palmer, Jocelyn Gelinias, Richard Betts, Jan van Egteren, Karen Decoux, Shelley Spence, Merle Ann May and Bruce Dean. Lee Spice, as a representative from Chinook Winds Region Pastoral Relations, has acted as an advisor to the ASC.

This report is a culmination of the deliberations of the ASC to date. The ASC fully endorses and is unanimously in favor of amalgamation for SAUC and DPUC. Based on this unanimity and on feedback from both existing communities of faith the ASC hereby recommends that:

- ***The Faith Communities of Deer Park United Church and St. Andrews United Church each hold a vote to determine whether or not to proceed with amalgamation of the two faith communities into one faith community (the Amalgamation Vote);***
- ***The Amalgamation Vote occur in late October or early November 2021 but no later than November 7th, 2021;***
- ***The two communities of faith each vote in favour of amalgamation; and***

- ***If the Amalgamation Vote is in favor of amalgamation that amalgamation be implemented on January 1, 2022.***

It is important to note that all of the recommendations outlined in this report must first be accepted and ratified by both faith community Councils. A more detailed proposal pertaining to the vote and an amalgamation implementation process is contained in the Governance section of this report.

It is also especially important to note that the ASC does NOT believe amalgamation should occur due to necessity. It does maintain that amalgamation will allow the combined community to grow, to provide more faith, pastoral and outreach services as a single entity, rather than as two separate organizations. The ASC believes amalgamation opens up exciting new horizons.

2. Faith, Vision, Mission and Call to Action Statements

The ASC has developed proposed Faith, Vision, Mission and Call to Action Statements for the new community of faith assuming a vote in favour of amalgamation. The ASC recommends that these statements form the foundation of the new community of faith. The new statements were developed based on the following key criteria. They should be:

- more than just a “mash-up” of the existing statements
- short and memorable;
- active/dynamic;
- forward looking
- inclusive and inviting.

The ASC recommends that the following Faith, Vision and Mission Statements and Call to Action be adopted by the new community of faith if amalgamation is approved

Faith Statement:

We are an inclusive, open, and progressive community of faith within the liberal Christian tradition. We aspire to live out God’s call by our actions, day to day.

We celebrate that we are not alone and that the mystery and excitement of God’s love for all persons and creation was taught to us by Jesus and lives in us by the spirit.

We are an affirming community of faith where all people are invited and welcomed, accepted and not judged, honouring all ages, races, family structures, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic status, and spiritual point of views.

We take the Bible seriously, but not literally, recognizing that parts of the tradition came out of specific historical circumstances and need re-interpretation for our time. We believe that a questioning theology is a healthy part of one’s spiritual journey.

We are called to live God's love and follow the way of Jesus by:

1. Loving and serving others
2. Respecting all creation
3. Celebrating life
4. Embracing diversity
5. Pursuing justice for all
6. Nurturing spiritual growth

Vision Statement:

“Continually striving to be a wholly-inclusive and vibrant Christian Community of Faith, caring for all God’s people and Creation”

Mission Statement:

“Reaching out with unconditional love, a dynamic faith, and compassionate hands”

Call To Action:

As a community of faith, we commit to:

- Doing all things in love and compassion.
- Intentionally inviting others in the spirit of genuine hospitality to participate in our faith community, where all will be welcomed, accepted, honoured, and supported.
- Creating inclusive, safe ministries and environments with a shared sense of belonging.
- Nurturing and proclaiming our faith through our ministries and programming.
- Seeking out opportunities to actively engage with and serve our local and broader communities.
- Taking action against injustices in our world and helping to find solutions.

3. Name for the New Community of Faith

Assuming a vote in favour of amalgamation, one of the first things that will need to be done is to choose a name for the new community of faith. This needs to occur primarily for legal reasons and for changes that need to be made to various entities that the community of faith has to deal with. For example, the Canada Revenue Agency needs to be informed as soon as possible in order to maintain our non-profit status. A Naming Sub-committee has been struck and is seeking feedback from both faith communities. It is not the intention of the committee to make the final decision on a name. The final decision on a new name will be made by members of the newly amalgamated Community of Faith immediately following the Amalgamation Vote. One name will be presented by the Naming Committee, with a full explanation and context provided for why the committee is suggesting it. The congregation will then indicate its approval with a vote that will require the same mandate as the amalgamation vote. Here are some of the names that have been suggested and are under

consideration: (i) Fish Creek United Church, (ii) Creek's Edge United Church, (iii) Common Ground United Church, (iv) Mountain's Edge United Church, (v) Horizons United Church, (vi) The Awakening United Church, (vii) South Connecting United Church, (viii) Connections United Church, (ix) River's Edge United Church, (xi) Embrace United Church, (xii) Living Waters United Church.

4. Financial Matters

The ASC has looked at the financial statements of both faith communities for the period 2017 to 2020 inclusive. The primary goal of this analysis was to determine if the faith communities needed to make significant changes to expenditures upon implementation of amalgamation. The ASC has determined in its opinion that no major reductions in expenditures are required upon implementation of amalgamation. Because both faith communities are in good financial shape, the ASC recommends that all programs, Ministries and current staffing levels can and should be maintained. In addition, by eliminating overlaps in financial, volunteer and personnel resources, additional Ministries and programs can be developed and offered at existing funding levels. The Governance section provides details on a proposed process for developing and implementing a budget for 2022 prior to January 1 2022.

5. Governance

Setting up a governance structure for the potentially amalgamated Communities of Faith is important so that the Community can operate and live out its mission, values and faith in an efficient manner. The governance section of this report details a number of legal and organizational issues that must be dealt with when forming a new governance structure. Because of these complexities and the requirement that the new faith community have a governance structure in place commencing on January 1 2022, the ASC recommends that the two communities of faith have a "joint congregational" meeting in late Nov. or early Dec. At that meeting the new community of faith would:

- Vote in a Transitional Council, such slate to be recommended by the joint councils of the existing faith communities;
- Vote in a Board of Trustees; the ASC recommends that all members of the currently existing Boards of Trustees be invited to serve on the Board of Trustees for the new faith community; and Vote in a Ministries & Personnel Committee, the ASC recommends that all members of the currently existing Ministry and Personnel committees be invited to serve on the Ministry and Personnel committee for the new faith community; and
- Vote on a proposed budget for 2022.

6. Staffing

The staffing section of the report provides a summary of the responsibilities of all existing staff of both faith communities. The ASC believes that the current "level" of staffing is

appropriate and affordable for the new community of faith. Therefore, the ASC recommends that:

- all current staff be retained;
- the new M&P committee in conjunction with staff review all positions and Ministries to determine where current responsibilities may overlap; and
- the M&P committee work in conjunction with staff to recommend how freed up personnel resources could be utilized to institute new, or augment existing, Ministries and programs.

7. Ministries and Programs

The ASC has completed an extensive review of the more than 45 ministries and programs currently (pre-pandemic) offered by our communities of faith. The Ministries and Program section of the report provides a summary of the programs by key focus areas and Appendix ----- is a listing of all the programs with additional details for each of the programs.

The ASC recommends that all of the Ministries and programming being offered continue upon amalgamation, if amalgamation is approved.

The ASC also recommends that we look for ways to effectively coordinate programs and pursue opportunities for collaboration between programs. This will help ensure that we have the necessary staff, volunteers, space and financial resources in place as well as identify new opportunities to grow stronger, expand our reach and further develop meaningful ministries and programs.

8. St. Andrew's Regional Ministries

St. Andrew's Regional Ministries is a key ministry of the St. Andrew's Community of Faith. The programs being run involve the participation of various communities of faith throughout Calgary and area. St. Andrew's Regional ministries has its own management committee and dedicated funding that was established using the majority of the funds from the sale of the St. Andrew's church building. This section of the report provides a summary of the various St. Andrew's initiatives.

The ASC recommends that St. Andrew's Regional Ministries become a ministry of the new community of faith. The Regional Ministries would continue to operate under the same terms of reference as it currently has, but amended to reflect that it would now be a ministry of the new community of faith.

9. Facilities

The lease for the St. Andrew's Center terminates in November 2023. Based on previous discussions with the St. Andrew's Centre landlord, it is highly unlikely that an early termination agreement could be worked out (that did not require significant early termination payments). Therefore, for the present time the ASC has assumed that the St. Andrew's Center space will continue to be available and utilized until November 2023. As a result, there is no immediate need to make room for SAUC staff or programs operating in

the DPUC building. However, the ASC recommends that facilities and space planning start now for the post November 2023 time frame. As a result, the ASC has constituted a Facilities Committee to begin such deliberations.

10. Honouring and Celebrating our histories

The ASC recommends that new community of faith identify ways to honour and celebrate our histories that are a part of the firm foundation that the new community of faith will be built on.

The St. Andrew's youth group has already offered to help create a video and Deer Park will be hiring 2 summer students to do research on our histories.

More detailed information on each of these areas of consideration for amalgamation is provided in the body of the full Amalgamation Steering Committee Report.