

CHRIST FIRST

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA



**MOVING FORWARD
REQUIRES A SHARED VISION**

FALL CONGREGATIONAL REPORT

OCTOBER, 2019

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Dear Christ First Friends,

During the amalgamation process, members of both congregations on the Joint Amalgamation Committee (JAC) negotiated intensely but always in good faith, as they strived to construct a new constitution for Christ First. It was important to the members of the JAC that the wonderful legacies of almost two centuries of service to the community by each of the founding churches, be properly reflected in the Mission and Vision statements of its new constitution. The JAC, while satisfied that the new constitution thoughtfully met the requirements of both congregations, acknowledged it was still a work in progress. Since the date of amalgamation, Council has diligently tried to remedy the issues normally experienced when two long standing entities become one. I am pleased to say that much positive headway has been made but still work remains to ensure that everyone is comfortable with this union.

With this in mind a “visioning session”, professionally facilitated for the congregation, is scheduled for **November 3rd**, after the combined service. This is a timely post amalgamation opportunity to review our current governance model and plans for the future. Most importantly, this is your opportunity to challenge the status quo and make a difference in our future. Please take a moment to review the committee summaries. They should position you to better understand the Christ First governance model and additionally to participate in helping us shape what should be an exciting future for the Christ First family. In order for this exercise to be meaningful it is important that as many people as possible be involved.

While the day to day decisions and/or initiatives are performed at the committee level, input from Council is always sought for higher level policy decisions including but not limited to planning for the future. Council is ever mindful that its primary responsibility is to the congregation. Therefore, it is incumbent upon these two bodies to be of one mind. This is why the theme of the congregational meeting is “**Moving Forward Requires a Shared Vision**”.

Sincerely,



Steve Shaver,
Chair of Council

Curating a Vision for Christ First

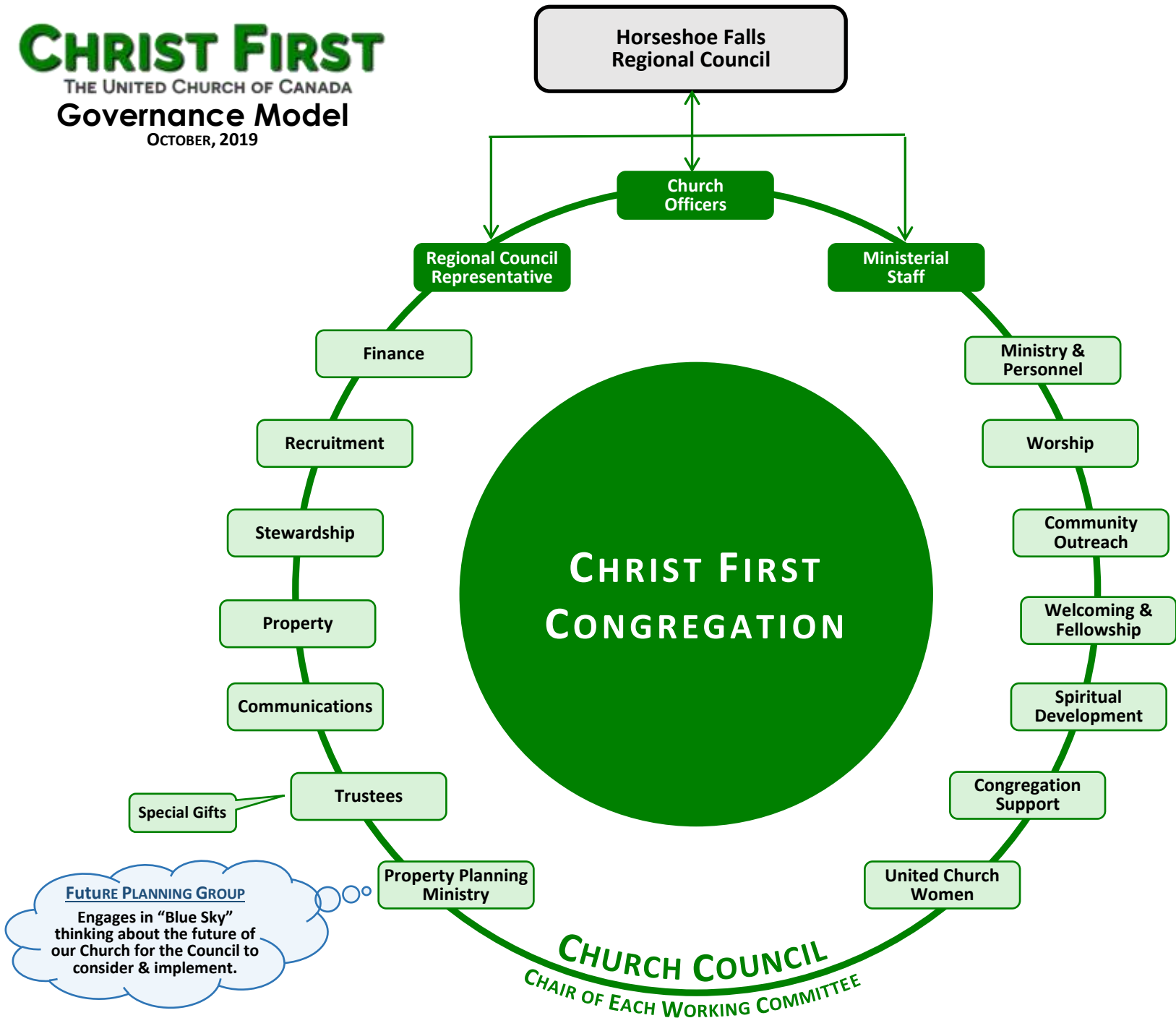
As we continue to explore the challenging, exciting world of creating a new church, we all have the challenge and the possibility of becoming ‘curators,’ selecting those elements of church that best help us to achieve our vision of who we are called to be. The history of Christianity offers up many, many traditions, practices, and rituals of how to be church, so we have much to choose from.

How we worship, who we welcome for baptism or burial, how we govern, how individuals move into activities and leadership, how we function as church on a daily basis, to what we give our energy and why, how we practice hospitality to one another and to our neighbours: all these are topics our leadership are encouraging us to think and talk about. And in the process we will move towards selecting those practices and ways of being and doing church that most members are drawn to. Selections may be made that attract you; others maybe not so much. We may mostly go one way but occasionally go another to meet the needs of those who may be in the minority. One of the great freedoms in the United Church is that we are not bound to conform to set rules about how we worship, what words we say, how we make decisions, etc.

It will be in the crucible of sorting and selecting, practising and refining, in small group conversation, tempered by love and prayer not individuals’ wants, that will bring us to the best version of church that we can be. Our present leaders offer their reflections on our vision arising out of our accomplishments this year as a way to continue the conversation with all our members.

This process of selecting, practising and refining isn’t always comfortable, so this is a fragile time that requires patience and an openness to voices around us with which we may not always agree. It will involve de-selecting elements of church that have been comfortable companions to us in the past. Curating a vision for church can create new pathways and adventures.

CHRIST FIRST
 THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Governance Model
 OCTOBER, 2019



Future Planning Group
 Engages in "Blue Sky" thinking about the future of our Church for the Council to consider & implement.

Ministerial Staff

Senior Minister	Rev. Dr. Morar Murray-Hayes (Ex-Officio member for all committees except M & P)
Youth & Family Minister	Mark Chown

Church Officers

Chair of Council	Steve Shaver
Vice Chair	Ed Mock
Secretary	Carol Wilson
Treasurer	Susan Nicholson

Regional Council Representative	Carol Hennigar
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Committee Chairs

Board of Trustees	Claude Lewis
Ministry & Personnel	John Nicholson
Finance	Clarke Grice
Property	Doug Robinson
Worship	Karin Stangenberg
Communications	Nancy Hori
Congregation Support	Marg Shaver
Community Outreach	Ginny Robinson & Kay Cranston
Welcome & Fellowship	MaryEllen Richards
Spiritual Development	Teresa Madeira
Stewardship	Mary Dowding-Paré
Recruitment	John Fargey
U.C.W.	Pat Skinner
Property Planning Ministry	Mike Giguere

Future Planning Group	Shawn Bausch
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Mandate:

A Regional Council is a decision-making body responsible to serve and support Communities of Faith within its bounds and provide necessary oversight. Christ First (CF) is responsible for electing representatives of the community of faith to the Regional Council. Representatives must be members of the community of faith. The number of representatives depends on the size of the community of faith and Christ First could have one or possibly two additional representatives. Clergy are also members of the Regional Council. Members serve the region through participating in the activities of the various commissions of the Region and through local engagement.

Horseshoe Falls Regional Council (HFRC) meets in person several times each year, for learning, information sharing, worship and to conduct business. Newsletters are regularly circulated between meetings. The website is unfortunately not yet available, but hopefully will soon be online.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

As your rep, I have connected the CF Council with information/documents being sought and participated in the meetings noted above as well as the three-day Horseshoe Falls Regional Council AGM. Funds are available from Christ First to cover expenses for these events. I am a resource person on the Covenanting Commission. I attended the recent Covenanting service for Rev. Scott Beckett at Trinity United Church in Oakville. I endeavour to ensure that you are all aware of the many interesting learning opportunities that occur in our area and encourage your participation - through announcements, personal conversations, reports to Council, and forwarding of the HFRC newsletters. There's a lot going on beyond our own walls & staying connected is helpful. I also continue in my role as a Commissioner to General Council 43, but that is in addition to and separate from regional rep responsibilities.

Looking Ahead:

I encourage others to consider accepting a nomination to be a Regional Council Rep for Christ First. If you are curious, I welcome you to come along with me to the next HFRC gathering - Nov. 9 in Font Hill. It would be a positive thing for our new church to have full representation on Regional Council and engagement with learning about, supporting and shaping the future of our wider church.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Claude Lewis

Mandate:

The Board of Trustees hold all real and personal property of the Church in trust and safekeeping for the Congregation. Trustees are also responsible for the disposition of the various endowment funds of the Church.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

One Board meeting was held in January 2019 which approved the use of \$24,000 of Church endowment funds to go toward the cost of sewer repairs on Clarkson Campus property. One non-achievement is the recent resignation of Helen Woodward as a Trustee.

Looking Ahead:

The annual inspection of Christ First Church buildings and property will be carried out this Fall: September 30th for Port Credit Campus and October 8th for Clarkson Campus.

FINANCE

Clarke Grice

Mandate:

- Manages the financial affairs of the congregation and oversees the Treasurer
- Ensures appropriate control and recording of all financial transactions in keeping with established guidelines
- Prepares financials for approval and for independent review purposes
- Prepares and presents budgets for Council and Congregation

Achievements since Amalgamation:

Consolidation and transfer of financial matters both internally and externally to new church name.

Looking Ahead:

- Address any outstanding financial issues relating to amalgamation
- Manage all aspects of the financial affairs monthly ensuring that valid fiscal controls are in place and are maintained

Christ First – Financial Summary

As of Aug. 31 2019

	YTD Actual	YTD 2019 Budget	+/- Variance	2019 Year Budget
Receipts				
Identified Givings	286K	269K	17K	401K
Fund Raising	39	30	9	35
M & S Givings	12	3	9	5
Rent	142	124	18	184
Other	7	10	(3)	23
Totals	486K	436K	50K	648K
Expenditures				
Outreach	73K	64K	9K	95K
Personnel	204	208	(4)	318
Ministry Programs	18	34	(16)	56
Property	107	106	1	158
Admin/Operating	21	19	2	25
Totals	423K	431K	(8)K	652K
Surplus/(Deficit)	63K	5	58K	(4)
Extra Ord. /inc/(exp)	(30)	(20)	10	(33)
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	33K	(15)K	48K	(37)K

Comments:

- Identified Givings are in excess of budget by \$17K with overall receipts in excess by \$49K which is very pleasing
- Included in Outreach are M & S Givings totalling \$49K which includes both designated donations from church members as well as 13% of Identified Givings plus Denominational Assessment in excess of \$13K
- Property Rental & Expenses relates to both Christ First Mazo and First United Campuses
- A good portion of the Ministry programs favourable expense position can be related to-
 - Timing differences in spending re Communications (new logos and new signs) and Worship (Retention of Technology Director)
 - Spiritual Development also falls into this category due to a reduced scope of the March Break camp as well as no spending recorded to-date on Youth/Family programs, Confirmation Classes and Summer Band Camp

Operating shortfalls are projected for September-November, but in keeping with historical experience December's favourable results have the biggest impact on where we stand at year end.

MINISTRY & PERSONNEL

John Nicholson

Mandate:

To support the work of Christ First's staff team, facilitating communication between staff members and the congregation. To encourage and enable the setting and achievement of goals aligned to the vision and mission of the church.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Extended the appointment of Rev. Morar Murray-Hayes
- Re-configured the staff music team with Jane Wamsley moving to a role focused on Sunday accompaniment, leadership from Leanne Piller supported by Sandy, Jane and Greg

Looking Ahead:

- Establishing a new set of priorities for the new staff team as Christ First develops its plans for the future
- Encouraging clarity and communication for a team that is new and still forming

WELCOMING & FELLOWSHIP

MaryEllen Richards

Mandate:

The purpose of this Committee is to welcome all to the joy and fellowship of the Congregation. The Committee plans, coordinates, and hosts various fellowship events.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Sunday Refreshments before/after Services
- Pancake Tuesday Dinner
- Pizza Lunch - Scout Sunday
- Celebrate Our Volunteers Dinner
- Lunch on the Lawn Picnic
- Welcome back Chicken Barbeque
- Good Neighbours
- Sip n' Serve
- Port Credit Campus Coffee & Fellowship time

Looking Ahead:

Establishing more social and recreational groups which will appeal to specific interests of members and adherents, such as "Dinner Club", Men's Breakfast, Amalgamation Anniversary dinner etc. In addition, continue to support other committee initiatives with coordination of refreshments etc.

CONGREGATION SUPPORT

Marg Shaver

Mandate:

- To plan and put in place pastoral care programmes designed to address a variety of needs with input from Church Office and Ministry staff (Cards, calls, visits, Prayer Shawls, homemade soup delivery, etc.)
- To monitor Church roll
- To plan (with Ministry staff) Home Communion
- Recruit Church Visitors with the 'lofty' goal of having every church household on a Visitor's list
- Oversee and encourage Church Visitors in their role as they seek to develop rapport with the households on their list, conduct their 'visits' (in various forms) and provide feedback to Ministry staff
- Oversee Bereavement Callers list

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Worked to recruit new Visitors
- Tried to carry out Pastoral Care needs and Inspire Visitors in their role

Looking Ahead:

- Will continue to support members and Visitors in a variety of ways
- Will recruit more Visitors
- Joint roll will be finalized

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Pat Skinner

All women in the United Church are welcome to join a unit. We have an executive and three units.

- The Seekers meet the second Thursday of the month in the Merigold Room at 9:45 AM. Marilyn Watters is the convenor
- The Dorcas meet the second Tuesday of the month in the Merigold Room. Pat Skinner & Tanya Swinborne are the convenors
- Night Out for Women (NOWW) meet on the fourth Wednesday evening of the month usually in the Merigold Room. Marg Shaver is the convenor

Come and join us. We all have different programmes.

WORSHIP

Karin Stangenberg

Mandate:

The purpose of this Committee is to enable people to follow a spiritual journey, growing in their knowledge and love of God in Jesus Christ through worship. The responsibility of the Worship Committee is to ensure full involvement of the Congregation in celebrative worship according to the liturgy of the United Church of Canada.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Only one Sunday service was held during the months of July and August. July services were held at St. Stephens-on-the-Hill, while August services were held at Christ First
- Youth hosts were introduced to assist with the logistics of the two services
- We successfully sought out volunteers from both churches to provide support for the services and welcomed Andy Choles to our committee

Looking Ahead:

- To introduce and establish the last Sunday of November to be celebrated as Anniversary Sunday, the first of which will be celebrated November 24, 2019
- Will coordinate with Communications Committee to produce new bulletin covers with new logo

9:02 EXPRESS

Mark Chown

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Regular attendance seems to have gone up slightly since amalgamation and created a more “lively” feel to the service
- The addition of Hosts has meant consistency in projection, and the addition of a guitarist has made the service more robust of late
- Combined services have felt more “combined” with good representation of both worship styles

Looking Ahead:

- Recruitment and retention of participants in both the worship team and congregation
- Consistent message and branding for 9:02 coupled with Christ First as a whole
- Consider technical improvements for both sound & A/V
- Alternative worship services beyond “contemporary” i.e. discussion groups, video teaching etc.

MUSIC MINISTRY (10:30 SERVICE)

Jane Wamsley

A team of three musicians now share the Music Ministry at Christ First. As of September 2019, we welcome Leanne Piller and Sandy Garraway, formerly of First United to the Christ First music family. Their many gifts will enhance and enrich worship at Christ First.

To prepare for Amalgamation:

- Christmas 2018 Candlelight Service -Several Christ Church chancel choir members including choir director Jane Walmsley attended and sang with the First United choir

Amalgamation January 2019:

- Closing Service at First United. Christ Church chancel choir combined with First United chancel choir
- First Service of "New Church". Leanne Piller directed the choir
- Jane continues as Music Director of Christ First until September 2019

September 2019:

- Leanne Piller, formerly Music Director at First United, assumes the role of Music Director at Christ First
- Jane shares the duties of accompanist/organist with Sandy Garraway former organist at First United each taking 2-3 Sundays each month

I wish to thank Christ Church and Christ First members for giving me the privilege of serving in ministry for all these years and welcome Leanne and Sandy to the team. - *Jane*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Ginny Robinson & Kay Cranston

Mandate:

To promote the financial and volunteer commitment of the Congregation to support of the local community, both corporately and individually.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Participated in Winter Survival Program, providing warm clothing and survival kits to homeless in Mississauga
- Initiated use of Port Credit campus Minister office for Neighbourhood Care Network
- Coordination of the Easter Compass Dinner at the Port Credit Campus and food drive on Easter weekend

Looking Ahead:

- Community Round Table gathering at Port Credit Campus on Oct 23
- BigHead River Foodgrain Bank - talk by Henry Reinders about his trip to Malawi
- Toonie Tree - gathering of toonies for World Hunger which is matched 4 to 1 by government
- Mitten Tree - gathering of winter mittens, coats and keyhole scarves for distribution to needy children

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Teresa Madeira

Mandate:

The purpose of this Committee is to enable people to take a spiritual journey, growing in their knowledge and love of God in Jesus Christ through learning and the expression of Christian values. It is a responsibility of the Spiritual Development Committee to increase, enable, and encourage people to grow and develop in their personal faith journey through involvement in and commitment to learning through programs appropriate at every life stage.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- 9:02 Sunday School "Breakfast Club"
- Acquisition of youth "Hosts" to manage operations during Sunday services
- Scout Sunday which involves Scout/Beaver participation in our Sunday service followed by a congregational lunch
- March Break Band Camp
- Easter Communion given by previous year's Confirmation class
- Vacation Bible School
- Summer Band Camp
- Adult Education - Ted Lutz Bible Study

Looking Ahead:

- Halloween Community Event
- Adult Education - Ted Lutz Bible Study
- Advent Event - Christmas craft, potluck, pageant and tree lighting

COMMUNICATIONS

Nancy Hori

Mandate:

- Coordinate, plan, and produce effective, timely communications material that will nurture and inform the Congregation and, when applicable, the community at large
- Support and advise the Church Council and its Committees on communications matters
- Maintain digital media presence for Christ First

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Developed the process for naming “New Church”
- Incorporated branding message for Christ First - *Spiritually Engaged, Community Focused*
- New Signage at the Port Credit campus to reflect the usage of the building
- New Facebook Page

Looking Ahead:

- New logo & branding
- New Website & Instagram Page

Once a logo has been selected, the branding process can begin. Signage, print and digital platforms will reflect the new image.

PROPERTY

Doug Robinson

Mandate:

To maintain, and update as needed, properties at both the Clarkson and Port Credit Campuses while administrating rental incomes, security, cleaning and general repairs.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- At Clarkson Campus: New flooring in sanctuary and main hallway and renovation of Merigold Room and Church Office
- Port Credit Campus: New roof

Looking Ahead:

- Renovation of Minister’s office at Clarkson Campus
- Installation of water backflow valve at both campuses

RECRUITMENT

John Fargey

Mandate:

- Develops collective knowledge about skill sets and experience of congregants
- Understands the organization of Christ First and to a lesser extent the UCC
- Identifies candidates to fill leadership positions and presents opportunities to serve
- Recruits individuals to serve in various capacities with emphasis on a broad base of support

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Presented a nominations report to congregation on February 10, 2019
- Identified a few more Christ First people for certain committees
- Provided Mary Dowding-Paré with suggestions for the Stewardship Program

Looking Ahead:

- Currently looking for someone to serve as Treasurer
- Identifying possible Visitors (Elders) to serve districts of Christ First
- Always looking to match people with roles to be filled.

STEWARDSHIP

Mary Dowding-Paré

Mandate:

The Stewardship Committee's mandate is to develop and implement a yearly stewardship program in the church. The program invites church members to renew and celebrate their spiritual and financial commitment to the church. Each member is asked to submit their estimated givings for the next year which will form the basis for determining the annual church budget.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

The stewardship program this year will run from October 27 to November 24. It will be the first stewardship program for our combined congregation and will feature members from both former churches speaking about the importance in their lives of their church connection. It will end with a combined celebration of our commitment to Christ First and to our first anniversary as a new congregation.

Looking Ahead:

The stewardship program will be a yearly commitment for Christ First that will be an important tool in building a strong church. It will look for meaningful and creative ways to engage members of the congregation in reflecting on the gifts they can contribute to Christ First - spiritually and financially.

Mandate:

The role of the Future Planning Group (FPG) is to engage in “blue-sky”, “out of the box” thinking about the future direction of the church. The FPG brain-storms, consults, elicits input, researches, and considers ideas for new initiatives, directions and projects. The FPG then defines projects and develops concrete project implementation plans which it recommends to Church Council. FPG hands off approved project plans to the existing church committees or new groups of volunteers identified during project planning, to put projects into action.

The Initial FPG Deliverable:

In May of 2018, after two years of brain-storming and researching vision in participating in the EDGE process, the FPG delivered its “Three Pillars” vision to the congregation. The Three Pillars of the church vision were defined and accepted by the congregation as: Community Involvement, Spiritual Engagement and Strong Connection with Members.

Second (Current) Deliverable:

Using input from three sets of congregational round-tables in May/June of 2018, the FPG developed a short-list of twelve new initiatives for the purpose of more clearly bringing to life the “Three Pillars” vision.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

- Welcome Back BBQ with Renters Fair: delivered Sept 16, 2018
- Volunteers’ ‘Thank-you’ Event: delivered May 26, 2019 at the Port Credit Campus
- Property Planning Ministry: launched June, 2019
- Neighbour Care Network: launched July, 2019
- Community Roundtables Event: delivering Oct 23, 2019 at the Port Credit Campus

Looking Ahead:

The FPG has an outstanding commitment to communicate back to the congregation about the projects considered, the outcomes of deliberations on project ideas put forward by the congregation, and the current projects in development. This should take place during the Fall, as a brief address during worship.

The FPG will continue to elicit project ideas from the congregation, and everyone should feel welcome to submit an idea. Pending input, the FPG plans to complete its second deliverable, launching 12 projects which live out the “Three Pillars” vision, by September, 2020.

Mandate:

The Property Planning Ministry's (PPM) mandate is to define an efficient and effective plan to leverage our considerable real estate assets to sustainably deliver on our responsibility to care for the disenfranchised in our community. This is to be done in the context of our core values, purpose and mission as defined in the constitution of "Christ First". In addition to being efficient and effective, the plan must respect the full spectrum of our member's definition of "church". At one end of the spectrum there are those that revel in the pattern, peace and consistency of a traditional Sunday service and at the other end we have folks that are satisfied with a much looser definition of church service if they can identify with the "community". These perspectives are not in competition. They are codependent. One is the anchor for the other.

Achievements since Amalgamation:

The team was assembled through winter and spring of 2019. We sought members with skills required for this ministry (urban planning, real estate, risk, governance as examples). Property values have been obtained for both properties. After a summer hiatus the PPM team members have aligned to support 2 tracks.

Track 1: Is focused on the development of rental policies and guidelines covering, such things as types of organizations we should rent to, rates, inclusions and a host of details. Sustainable rental income will allow us to maintain both properties while we pursue opportunities under track 2.

Track 2: "Blue Sky Thinking": This track will consider such questions as: What sort of physical space do we need to support all that we do (outreach activities, Sunday worship, pancake dinners, pot luck suppers et al)? How do we leverage our existing 12 million dollars (roughly) in real estate assets to accomplish this and help the greater good? What other South Mississauga churches and entities should we be speaking to, to explore assembling of real estate asset packages we can approach developers with? Is there a role for "Re-United", the emerging United Church of Canada development Corporation? How do we approach development partners? What do we do if approached?

Looking Ahead:

(1-3 years) Support Christ First's evolving community outreach ministries with an approach that is financially sustainable, making optimal use of our real estate assets in their current form.

Long term (3-10 years out) plans and visions are also being considered. These are nebulous now and will evolve into concrete proposals for review and approval by Council and the Congregation.

This Congregational Report is published under the auspices of the Christ First Council.

Christ First - The United Church of Canada

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www.christfirst.ca

Presented at the Fall Congregational Visioning Workshop
November 3, 2019
for the information of members and friends.

For further information, please contact the church office (905) 822-9834.