



December 8, 2022

Dear Friends:

We are writing to give you an update on amalgamation discussions between St. Stephen's on-the-Hill and Christ First. Our two amalgamation committees are now working together as a Joint Amalgamation Committee (JAC) that will make a recommendation about whether or not to proceed to amalgamation. We will keep you updated regularly as our discussions progress.

Members of the JAC are: Rob Ord (Co-Chair), Steve Shaver (Co-Chair), Jim Maxwell, Jacquie Knowles, Karen Pensenev, Cecilia Conlin, Clare Macdonald, Joan Cobbold, Louise Sinclair, Shawn Bausch, Barb Abrams, Rick Cranston and Mary Dowding-Paré.

Our two churches face similar challenges: aging congregations, increasing financial pressures and a declining number of volunteers. In addition to the above, we are aligned in several aspects – worship, music, church programs and the stewardship of valuable real estate assets. We feel that now is the time to be proactive and explore how we can jointly ensure long-term sustainability and achieve our visions – encompassing faith, community outreach, real estate and our long-term ministries. If we delay, we may no longer be in such a strong position to make decisions about our future.

Bringing two churches together is a complex task and must be done carefully and respectfully. The JAC has formed working groups that will be looking at property, finance, staffing, worship, music, governance and outreach. We will be reaching out to the congregations over the next few months to update you and respond to questions. It will take time to gather information in support of the recommendations we formulate, so please bear with us if we don't have all the answers you may be looking for right away.

If and when the committee feels comfortable that all the pieces fit well together and amalgamation is the best option for the future, we will come back to you with a recommendation for amalgamation. The final decision will be yours to make. Both congregations must vote on, and approve, the recommendation before we can amalgamate. In addition, we will need to seek approval from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.

If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please get in touch with one of the Co-Chairs, Rob Ord or Steve Shaver. We can be reached at [rord@sympatico.ca](mailto:rord@sympatico.ca) and [sshaver@whiteshedcapital.ca](mailto:sshaver@whiteshedcapital.ca) We will be pleased to talk to you. We will share the questions we receive and our responses in a regular newsletter so everyone gets consistent information.

We thank both congregations for your support as we begin this important, and exciting, work.

Sincerely,

Rob Ord

Co-Chair

Steve Shaver

Co-Chair