

## **General**

### **Why are we considering amalgamation?**

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.

### **Who is on the Joint Amalgamation Committee (JAC)?**

Amalgamation committees from St. Stephen's on-the-Hill and Christ First are now working together as a Joint Amalgamation Committee (JAC).

The JAC members 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.

### **Who do I talk to if I have questions about this amalgamation process?**

All questions about amalgamation should be directed to the co-chairs of the JAC, Rob Ord (St. Stephen's on-the Hill) and Steve Shaver (Christ First). They can be reached at: [rord@sympatico.ca](mailto:rord@sympatico.ca) and [sshaver@whiteshedcapital.ca](mailto:sshaver@whiteshedcapital.ca)

### **Where do I get information about the amalgamation process?**

The JAC will distribute joint communications about amalgamation in the form of a regular newsletter to keep both Councils and congregations updated as our work progresses. It will be posted on the websites of each of our churches simultaneously and may also be mailed out to congregants on request. In addition, the co-chairs will provide updates and respond to questions at periodic congregational meetings.

## **Amalgamation Process**

### **Who makes the decision to amalgamate?**

The congregations make the final decision to amalgamate. Both congregations must vote on and approve the recommendation from the JAC before we can amalgamate. In addition, we will need approval from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.

### **What are the steps in the amalgamation process?**

Amalgamation committees from St. Stephen's on-the-Hill and Christ First are now working together as a Joint Amalgamation Committee (JAC).

The JAC will make a recommendation about whether or not to proceed to amalgamation.

The committee will explore the areas of property, human resources, finance, music, worship, governance and outreach to determine whether there are any insurmountable obstacles to amalgamation. We will also look at how we can pool our people, resources and finances effectively in a new church.

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If the JAC is satisfied that amalgamation should proceed and is the best option for the future, we will write a report recommending amalgamation that will go out to both congregations at least two weeks before a vote. The two congregations will vote, on the same day, whether or not to accept the recommendation. If the recommendation is approved, then we will inform Horseshoe Falls Regional Council of the vote results and get their approval as well.

### **When will we know if we are amalgamating?**

The JAC will keep both churches informed of progress. Amalgamation will only take place after both congregations have voted on and approved a recommendation to amalgamate and we have received approval from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council.

## **Property**

### **Where will we be worshipping if we amalgamate?**

No decisions have been made about where we will worship after amalgamation.

We need to take an in-depth look at all three properties and have many more discussions before any decision can be made about a future worship location. That will take time.

## **Staffing**

### **What happens to our staff if we amalgamate?**

Staff is one of the priority areas for our amalgamation discussions. We value our staff and foremost among our considerations will be what opportunities can be created for them through amalgamation.

We are not looking to downsize but to see how both churches could be stronger together and achieve their visions.