

Joint Vision Statement St. Aidan's & CBUC

From Neighbourhood to Regional: A New Platform for a 21st Century Church

VISION:

Our vision is to become a regional thinking Community of Faith and Resource Centre for a progressive 21st Century Christian voice within Saanich and Greater Victoria Region (GVR) that seeks to live into a new model of being church that transcends current United Church practices of ministry and staffing models. In this new model, integration of learnings gleaned across denominational lines and other non-profits will help shape a dynamic, inclusive and responsive center that has built into it income streams, strategies of making a difference in people's individual lives and the lives of communities, connecting through diverse offerings and ways that take seriously the changing context of our world and its needs.

In this emerging model:

- small group ministry is a foundational structure and core principle.
- an intentional business plan including social enterprise, asset management and community givings are grounded in sustainability.
- an integrated lens of working to become an intercultural church is central
- the calls to the church of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) are taken seriously.
- Inclusive and diverse initiatives that meet the needs of a variety of people

We will have the staff, the resources, the vision and the commitment to implement the founding principle of The UCC, that of being a United and a Uniting community of faith that makes a difference.

THE CONTEXT:

1. Globally, the economic, social & ecological crises that face our world require us as humans to radically shift how we live, if we are to not only survive, but preserve a future for our children. In order to address these changes, community stakeholders, including the faith community, need to work collaboratively with local governments, community organizations, social enterprises & neighbours. As we listen to some of the top issues our region is naming, it is clear that the following areas intersect with where faith communities can & should have a stronger presence:
 - Climate change: adaptation & mitigation
 - Reconciliation
 - Social Isolation
 - Food Security
 - Placemaking, community building & fostering collaborative networks
 - Housing
 - Mental health & addictions

Indeed, faith communities have a vital role to play as people in our communities adapt to and deal with massive, often chaotic change. However, to rise to these challenges, as well as opportunities, our churches will require new tools & a significant shift in our governance & organizational structure.

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2. Our context has changed since 1925 when The United Church of Canada established an urban model of a congregation in every neighbourhood. Transportation, communication, people's patterns have changed and now people travel easily within the GVR. The population is also more religiously diverse than in 20th Century and Christianity is one voice among many and the Progressive Christian voice is often marginalized by media in favour of more conservative and reactionary Christian voices that seek to polarize. The need to be in every neighbourhood with a building is no longer strategically sound and instead we need to learn how to be a 'regional church'. This model will disperse staff and small groups throughout neighbourhoods making the church more nimble, responsive and connected. We have seen these same trends in:
 - health care,
 - in some areas of government
 - in the Saanich plebiscite to supporting conversation about municipal government amalgamation
 - In the United Churches of Langley , B.C.
 - In the recent restructuring of the National United Church

3. The National Church has committed itself to two priorities in the coming decade and we see our two congregations as being on the leading edge of these priorities.
 - To take seriously the TRC calls to the church and the UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous people to fully live into what it means to be a Reconciling church
 - To take seriously what it means to be an intercultural church and to lead from this place.

CBUC has had strong history of leadership in the region for issues related to Reconciliation and St Aidan's has had a strong history of staff and experimentation with Intercultural leadership and integration. We therefore have a shared history on which to build and work cooperatively with.

4. All of our congregations have become a mix of neighbourhood and destination memberships – it is a long time since the membership of a congregation was purely local. People are more than willing to travel to get what they want or need in their personal and family lives. Neighbourhoods are also more intercultural while the UCC has typically fairly ethnocentric. We need to address this failing in creative ways to stay reflective of the communities we are serving. Recent community response to land and resource development on First Nations lands show that there is a need and interest in

society as a whole to find more integral ways to be in relationship as we work out the implications of the TRC. The church has an important role to play in both leadership and a place for dialogue, conversation and listening.

GOALS:

- Communicate and refine this vision of establishing a Regional UC community of faith with a mandate to be a resource centre for a progressive Christian voice with the following characteristics:
 - a. To articulate the faith of a progressive Christian voice and provide programs, worship opportunities and an interfacing with social media so that this voice is upfront and visible
 - b. To model new ways of being church grounded in a small group ministry model. Rather than being a typical United church with small groups, we will be a Large regional church **OF** small groups. Small groups will be formed around demographics or shared interests/passions or geographic

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locations. They will consist of two leaders in each group and all involved will know that the groups are dynamic and new people will be moving into them from time to time and when the group gets larger than 15, it will divide into two groups. Groups can add members themselves from outside contacts and interest and/or the small group coordinator will add members whose needs fit a particular group. The goal is to integrate 80+% of the congregation into such groups. Each group will have 4 foci that the group will decide on how they will manage:

- i. Pastoral care and support
 - ii. Spiritual practice
 - iii. Learning or Study
 - iv. Outreach and/or Justice project or foci
- c. To model ways of being church that provide multiple and diverse entry points to involvement, nurture and service that are not focused on Sunday morning.
 - d. To experiment with other ways of being church that address societies growing sense of isolation by building community around shared passions and interest, justice issues, spiritual practices, healing, intercultural issues and work around reconciliation.
 - e. To build on the strengths both congregations currently have in the areas of strong programming, intercultural staff and processes and a history with relationship building and reconciliation with Indigenous persons and issues.
 - f. To establish links with and a presence in neighbourhoods in the CRD where there is currently no progressive Christian presence.
 - g. to be a resource for the continuing ministry of other neighbourhood congregations,
 - h. To make strong links with community partners with shared values and to seek to articulate ways our values and vision aligns with the larger Saanich vision for the future. To work in partnership not only with the municipality and its goals but with other nonprofits with whom we can work together to make a significant impact on the lives of people in the CRD and as a voice for change.
- To research and experiment with alternate models of sustainable funding for the future that both leverages current assets as well as preserves assets for future generations.
 - To build a social enterprise which will both live out the identified values of the community of faith and the denomination but will also be a source of revenue for other aspects of its mission and ministry.
 - Learn from other faith communities and values based businesses who have established regional bases rather than neighbourhood model
 - To continue with relationship built with the interfaith community and look for ways to continue to support and uplift shared areas of concern, interest and support of the larger community from a religious perspective.
 - Establish 3 primary working groups with subgroups emerging. Each group will also need to pay for resources (staff, consultants, studies, etc.) to help facilitate and attend to specific steps along the way that require history, skill and competence in those areas
 - a. One for Pragmatic organizational dynamics of potentially merging two congregations;
 - i. Issues of governance, finance, worship, small groups, fundraising, staffing, outreach, administration,
 - ii. Establishment of small group ministry and making the transition to a new model
 - iii. Addressing the anxieties and communication needs for current members and stakeholders

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- iv. Integration of intercultural programs and staff
 - v. Integration of reconciliation programs and initiatives
 - vi. To articulate a name for this new ministry entity
 - vii. To articulate and help establish diverse streams of service, ministry and entry points for both those who have historically supported and been nurtured by the present model of church as well as for those who have not found ways to connect and be supported in the past.
 - b. One for assessing the assets we have and ways they can be faithfully leveraged;
 - i. researching and analyzing what the financial and community value of the properties are
 - ii. investigate what the potential and possible uses might for the current assets the amalgamated community of faith would currently have
 - iii. uncover what restrictions or limitations there may be to the various assets and ways they can be leveraged
 - iv. proposing a regional location with needed qualities that might serve the future needs of the amalgamated community of faith and its programs;
 - v. discerning the wisdom of building or leasing for the future
 - vi. discerning the use of current properties in the larger vision and plan
 - vii. interfacing with the social enterprise and pragmatic working groups to see what needs they have articulated in relation to space and asset use and development
 - viii. connecting with and listening to the needs and articulated visions of neighbourhoods, district of Saanich and other partner groups
 - c. One for exploring social enterprise opportunities.
 - i. Discern what needs and values it will address
 - ii. Developing a strategic and viable business model
 - iii. Provide projections for 5 year income goals and economic model
 - iv. Articulation what difference it will make in the lives of individuals and the community
- Effect an amalgamation between St. Aidan's and Cadboro Bay United Church. This amalgamation will be one step in creating this greater regional presence – it is a step towards living into a larger vision of a regional resource that can live in every neighbourhood through small groups, action projects and staff presence. An amalgamation could work because both of these churches share an ethos of connecting with and caring about the wider United Church in Greater Victoria Region. They both value learned, well-resourced ministry that works to equip all the people of God for the service to which we are called. They both have already established patterns of multiple staffing. They have people in their congregations now who have experience through their work life with moving from 'smaller, more scattered and independent models' to more 'regional, consolidated, coordinated models' that are both centralized and dispersed. These leaders bring this experience and skill to this process
- In this transition time, while we are experimenting with new paradigms, we will continue to offer ministry in forms that are recognizable and nurturing to those who have created the legacy of church upon which this new incarnation and vision is being built. Those people will not be abandoned but rather shepherded in the process to see their place and their value along the way.
- This daring project will be a legacy gift of these two founding congregations consistent with their history and past actions to future generations and the communities in which they live and serve.