

St. Aidan's United Church
&
Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church

Amalgamation

November 2019

Amalgamation Proposal

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Introduction

This document contains elements of the history of what got us to where we are today, plans for moving forward and elements of decisions yet to come. It is the product of working groups, joint council, the project management team and of the staff in pulling together the many strands, conversations and presentations made over the last 3+ years

While it contains motions for amalgamation and this is an important step, it is much more than that. It contains directions and questions that will form the basis of the next steps in the process. While some might wish that the questions left for decision still were well formed and decided, our steering groups have been unwilling to put the tremendous amount of time that will be needed in the next steps if both congregations are not invested in moving forward. Thus you have before you are both the steps that have been taken as well as those yet to come.

Once it is approved by the members of both congregations and the Pacific Mountain Region, the two churches will be amalgamated and become the new “yet to be named” United Church effective Pentecost Sunday, May 31st 2020.

Throughout the discernment about this amalgamation, there has been wide participation in small group conversations, open invitation meetings and formally called congregational meetings. There have been opportunities for feedback with leadership. There have been multiple working groups with a large diverse group of people thinking, planning, dreaming and discerning together. The process is still unfolding and there will be many more opportunities for feedback and input as we move forward in our planning for the next stages of living together and embarking on some new and bold initiatives in ministry and mission.

This movement from a neighbourhood to a regional church is not simply a merger of our former selves, but rather the birth of a new church, a new platform, a new way to be church for the 21st century. By combining the people and material assets with which successive generations have faithfully stewarded, we are working to create a vibrant, faithful, contemporary and progressive expression of church for the region of Saanich.

Like the Ministry Vision that has emerged and is emerging still, this new platform for church will be ever evolving. It will always be looking for fresh expressions of the Progressive Christian faith to share and engage with folks who are seeking transformation in their lives and the life of the world we all live in. Ministries will grow and fade in response to where we discern in an ongoing way our individual and collective callings and where people feel their energy and passion is moving.

All those involved at each of the various stages of providing leadership have worked tirelessly on behalf of both congregations to make sure that multiple voices have been heard and good research has been engaged in. Imagination has been evoked and learning to think outside the box has been a solid requirement along the way.

While there are still significant decisions to be made as we move into the future, we do so with a trust in one another and in our leadership. At times it will feel like we are in the midst of chaos, at other times the choices and path ahead will be clear. Regardless, we will know that the Spirit is with us and we will trust both in the Spirit and in one another.

Exploring Amalgamation

History of Amalgamation

2014

Spring Informal conversation at smugglers cove with St A and GHUC leaders
Dec Tri-church advent gathering at CBUC

2015

Jan/Feb Proposal from CBUC Board to GHUC for Amalgamation and care taking designed
Mar 1 Proposal shared at CBUC at AGM and affirmed by congregation to proceed
Apr–Aug Cleaning up and sorting GHUC property, paperwork and taking over admin
Sept Victoria Presbytery declares GHUC and CBUC to be amalgamated
Dec Last Sunday Service in GHUC

2016

Jan–Apr Wednesday afternoon services and tea at GHUC
Apr St A's takes over this ministry and combines it with their Sr. program to create "Happy Hour"
July/Aug Remedial renovations to GHUC property to prepare for Arts Calibre Academy renting full days all year long
Sept GHUC Parents and Tots program moves to St A's
Fall Relationship building with St A's resumes

2017

April reVision proposal for both councils to consider doing together is discussed and affirmed
May-Aug reVision teams and leadership recruited and work begun
Sept–Nov Mixed small groups of 160 people from both congregations meet
Summit #1A meets at St A's to share insights and some possible directions moving forward

2018

Jan Summit #1B meets at CBUC to deepen insights and create 5 major focus groups and 3 sub-groups
Jan–May Focus groups meet to research and discern
May Summit #2 meets at CBUC to focus groups to report findings and recommendations. Timelines for integration proposed and motion is affirmed by those gathered. Cordova Bay joins us to observe. reVision process ends
Aug–Dec Joint councils meet for the first time, to sort out how they might relate to each other, build relationships and trust and figure out strategy for ways forward.

These include:

- Creating 3 working groups to research and make recommendations (Asset Management, Pragmatic and Social Enterprise)
- Work together on sharing program offerings and first joint program booklet created
- Joint Stewardship initiative with shared research about demographics and income streams
- Joint Application for Provision Grant is begun and consultant hired

2019

Jan–May

- Three working groups begin their work together to research, discern, struggle and prepare to make recommendations.
- Grant application is made, sent back for clarification and resubmitted again with revisions.
- Congregational AGMs at both places vote to put \$50,000 each toward the vision of “From Neighbourhood to Regional: a new platform for a 21st Century Church” and the general direction and vision is affirmed
- Congregations work to clean up membership roles and adherents lists

June Working groups share insights and thoughts about next steps to joint council gathering at Sunday afternoon retreat. Joint council meets 3 times that month to discern next steps for summer action and implementation for the fall. New timeline is created and shared with congregations

Summer Small group conversations in both congregations in a variety of formats exploring concepts of church outside the box and possible implications of an amalgamation

Fall

- Joint council sets a date for Amalgamation vote of Nov 24 and criteria for adherents list and membership lists for voting. These lists are posted in each congregation on Sept 15
- Congregational meetings called for Sept 22 and Oct 27 in advance of the vote
- Joint council creates an advisory subgroup to guide the work of amalgamation and make proposals to council and congregation as appropriate
- Consultants interviewed to guide some of the processes involved now and in the future
- Social enterprise initiatives being researched and pursued on a number of fronts

Steps Toward Integration Taken

Building on the mission strategy that “we can be more together than we are separate” and following the motion in May of 2018, work has happened on a number of fronts to integrate the mission and ministry of the two congregations. The following are some of the integrations that have occurred.

1. Program Brochure

For a second year, the program offerings at both church churches have been combined into one program brochure with members of both congregations moving between the two campus' and enjoying the diverse offerings. Overlap and competition for times and programs have been illuminated or streamlined.

2. Stewardship Campaigns

For a second year, the approach to the fall stewardship campaign has been to do this together. In the first year a comprehensive booklet with testimonies of givers in each congregation, statistics about demographics and donations, budgets and income streams and an invitation to pledge were jointly prepared. The parallels between the two congregations were quite similar to the surprise of many. In year two, a joint letter and pledge card was distributed post-Thanksgiving.

3. Joint Council

Beginning in the summer of 2018, members of both elected councils have met on a semi regular basis to discuss steps, discern hopes, dreams and differences and work to understand each other's way of doing and being church. In that time joint decisions have emerged and joint recommendations to each respective congregation have also been proposed. To help focus this work, a Project Management Team was formed with representatives from both councils to guide decisions and make recommendations back to the joint board.

4. Joint Working Groups

Beginning in January of 2019 and building on the work of the focus groups leading up to the final summit of reVision, the joint council appointed members from each congregation to 3 working groups. The Pragmatic Working Group, The Asset Management Working Group and the Social Enterprise Working Group. Groups had staff and/or consultants working with them to help focus their work. In June they presented their research, questions and suggestions to the joint board and to each other. A summary of their work was presented to the congregations through newsletter articles and presentations for those interested. Insights have informed decisions the joint council has made or recommended and further work may be asked of these groups in the future. Their research has also guided the Project Management Team.

5. Joint Social Enterprise Venture

In June of 2019, the Social Enterprise Working Group sent a proposal to the joint council of a possible social enterprise venture for the two congregations to invest in together. After much conversation and discernment the decision was made to proceed. Lawyers were hired to advise us regarding our charitable status. The National Church was contacted and they were enthusiastic and supportive. A small grant to help cover the legal costs was applied for and granted. Discussion and negotiations ensued over the summer. An independent board was established and members appointed by the joint board. In October, the good news was shared with both congregations simultaneously of our investment in the JUST LIKE FAMILY franchise. (see social enterprise section for more details)

6. Congregational Gatherings

A number of combined congregational gatherings have happened over the last 2 years including Shrove Tuesday Pancakes Supper, 50s' Rock and Roll Dance, Sunday post service lunch and small table group conversations, participation at the Pride Parade and Climate Action Strike, Walk for Homelessness Team and many other opportunities as they arose.

7. Joint Family Camp/Retreat

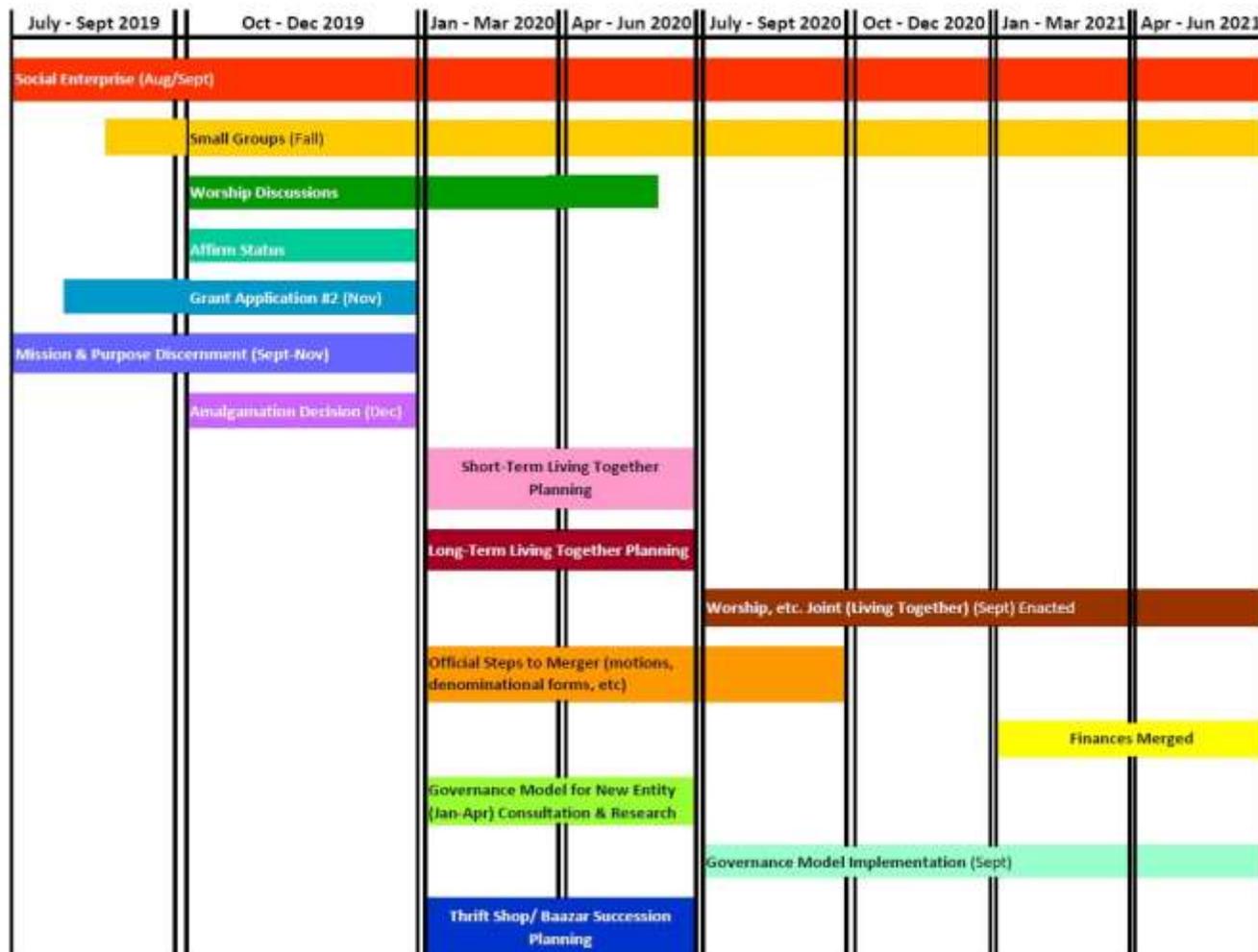
For the last two years we have had our annual June retreat together at Camp Pringle for a weekend of programming, relationship building and much laughter. This past year we also partnered with First Metropolitan United.

8. Joint Refugee Sponsorship

We are in the beginning stages of working together to co-sponsor a Palestinian refugee family.

Timeline Moving Forward

Draft Timeline for St. Aidan's & CBUC



How to Read the Draft Timeline for the Amalgamation Process?

The draft timeline above gives a general idea of how the process of living into the amalgamation might occur. It is a fluid timetable written in 3 month blocks to indicate what we will be focusing on during that time. We know only a few precise dates. We recognize that the process of amalgamating our two congregations will be affected by many factors, some beyond our control. So, let's look at the timeline.

1. The Social Enterprise, *Just Like Family*, has been announced on schedule (September) and is in the process of hiring a manager, then recruiting care aids and clients. It is now launched and will be largely independent of our amalgamation.
2. Small Groups are scheduled to begin this fall, and due to circumstances beyond our control, these will probably begin in January. Then, under Margaret Harper's leadership, we will ease into joint small groups.

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3. Worship discussions to discern the worship offerings will have in our combined church will begin this fall and continue in the first 6 months of 2020. This will offer diverse worship styles at a variety of times. The current worship styles of the two congregations will form the basis of the expanded worship offerings
4. Affirm Status is currently being worked on with regards to its transferability to the amalgamated congregation. Affirm's policy is that the status is not transferable in an amalgamation. We are in conversation with Affirm for a solution.
5. We applied for a ProVision grant and were given a one year grant of \$67,000 to assist us in our amalgamation, our social enterprise launch and our small groups launch. We need to reapply based on what we have accomplished thus far and with the results of our amalgamation vote in hand.
6. Mission and Purpose Discernment: We have begun this process with the document "From Neighbourhood to Regional: A New Platform for a 21st Century Church" that was affirmed by both congregations at their AGM's at the beginning of 2019. Work with this document has shaped many things over the course of the year so far including grant proposals, working groups, mandates etc. On Sept 30th both congregations came together following worship to share lunch and to reacquaint ourselves with the document and its contents. Discussion followed and we were led in a process where people wrote on the sheets what they imagine various aspects of church will look like in 2030 given the changes that are happening in transportation, communication, education, neighbourhoods, etc. We are beginning to envision what we can be in 2030 and our mission and purpose will be to develop into that church step by step. We will hire a consultant to begin work with us in January 2020, to assist us sorting out this issue as well as others.
7. When a positive Amalgamation vote occurs on Sunday, November 24 we will take the month of December to focus on Advent and Christmas. That vote will be a major step in our process and is the basis for all the steps following. But we also need to rest and live with that decision.
8. For the first six months of 2020 we will make plans on how we will temporarily live together as well as determine what our permanent home will look like. We will make our temporary space livable for the new church and congregation for the time it takes to renovate our permanent site to be what we need it to be. These location decisions will be made together by the Joint Councils. This will be a period where we will have the help of a consultant who will facilitate our coming together to consider this vital decision and let the Joint Councils listen. It will also be a time, once the permanent and temporary sites have been chosen to consult with architects and apply for necessary municipal permits for both locations.
9. During that first 6 months we will also be working together to determine a new name for our new congregation with its new vision, mission and mandate.
10. During the summer of 2020 we will move into the temporary site and begin worshipping in the temporary site in September 2020.

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11. During the first 6 months of 2020 we will also work with the Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church to formalize the amalgamation and get all the “church related motions and denominational requirements” completed. The project management team will also be working during this time to propose the best way to amalgamate the finances and the requirements of CRA and our charitable tax number and all other financial considerations of the two founding congregations.
12. In January 2021, the finances will be amalgamated under one CRA number and in accordance with denominational and governmental requirements for a charitable organization.
13. In the Jan – June 2020 period we will be in conversation with the P.M. Region as well as working with a consultant to establish a model of governance for the new congregation which will be implemented in September 2020 – when we begin to live in the same temporary site.
14. From Jan – June a new staffing model that will both lead us through the transition time and that we will be evolving into will be worked on by the Project Management Team. Current staff will all remain under appointment while the transition is taking place and help to lead the new congregation into their new home and new staffing model. New calls for ministers will be made by the new amalgamated congregation as the new staffing model is approved.

Guiding Principles for Amalgamation

Guiding Principles for Amalgamation Rationale: All parties to the amalgamation need to be working within the same parameters. These principles will guide our decisions and actions after the vote for the subsequent 2-3 year process of amalgamation, with the understanding that flexibility will be required in order for us to pivot and move forward together.

• **Principles of Relationships:** Knowing we are not alone, we will walk gently with each other, finding our way through change and loss, and we will walk with courage, upheld by the knowledge that collectively, our voice for a compassionate and just world is louder and we can do more to serve poor and vulnerable people.

• **Principles of Worship:** Opportunities for worship will expand and diversify rather than be reduced and absorbed.

• **Principles of Finances:** We will build upon diverse sources of revenue and income including but not limited to social enterprise, sale of assets, grants/bequests, rentals and donations, in order to create a regenerative economy for our new church. As stewards of these financial assets, our goal will be to secure the future of our new vision, a vision that may require risk-taking and flexibility as well as an awareness of the implications of the global situation. At all times, we will be guided by the need for financial sustainability and resilience.

• **Principles of Greater Community Engagement:** Our mission will be shaped by engagement with the greater community using the principle of 'adding value to community' by our presence and programs and through our selection of community partners and social enterprises that fit our vision and values. Relationships with community partners will evolve but reciprocity will be our hope and expectation. Engagement with the greater community will also be a goal of an expanded and revitalized on-line platform and presence, recognizing that our vision of church must extend to the digital world where so many of us now live, work and play.

• **Principles of Building:** Our goal is to permanently relocate to one of our three current sites. Temporarily, we will relocate to one of our sites, allowing us to thoroughly deconstruct and then renovate the permanent site so that it meets the requirements of our new mission in the Saanich region. It will be a new space for everyone, allowing us to give life to the bold vision of our amalgamated community. While professional input will be part of this process, consultation with the congregation will also happen as needed.

• **Principles of Building Improvements and Non-Essential Maintenance:** All buildings will cease to have improvements and non-essential maintenance done unless to do so would damage structural integrity and/or compromise safety of users.

• **Principles of Staffing:** The clergy from each congregation will continue to work for the new church during the 2-3 year amalgamation process. Where there are non-ministerial staff redundancies, severance packages will be fair and generous. Because of the nature of our new vision and mission as a regional church, a diverse multifaceted staffing model is likely to evolve; staff job descriptions and responsibilities will likely change throughout the amalgamation process in order to better serve the new church we are creating together.

• **Principles of Naming:** A new name for the new congregation will be chosen and congregational input will be part of the process.

• **Principles of Governance:** Because neither of the current governance models being utilized will support our new vision and mission adequately, a new model of governance will need to be discerned. Professional assistance will be sought in order to create a system of governance that will enable our new church to bring its vision to life - a model that will reflect United Church values and allow us to be flexible, collaborative and decisive in our decision-making style.

• **Principles of Consultation and Communication:** Consultation with the congregation and other community partners will be sought throughout the amalgamation process as needed. Council will communicate the process and progress of the amalgamation with the congregation on an on-going and regular basis.

Official Motions for Nov 24th Meeting

Voting Privileges for Adherents

1. Moved/ seconded by _____/_____ that voting privileges for Adherents named on our Voting List and according to the criteria set by Joint Councils, September, 2019, be approved.

Amalgamation Proposal

2. Moved/ seconded by _____/_____ that the PROPOSAL FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF **Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church and St. Aidan's United Church** be received.

3. Moved/ seconded by _____/_____ that the approval of the PROPOSAL FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF **St. Aidan's United Church and Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church** requires a 60% majority of votes in favour from those present and eligible to vote.

Vote by each congregation:

4. Moved/ seconded by _____/_____ that (**Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church**) / (**St. Aidan's United Church**) approve the PROPOSAL FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF **Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church and St. Aidan's United Church** and request that the Pacific Mountain Region approve the amalgamation of **St. Aidan's United Church and Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church** to create one community of faith/pastoral charge of the United Church of Canada, effective May 31, 2020.

For Information on the Action of the Secretary's of both Church Councils after a positive vote for amalgamation:

Proposal for the Amalgamation of Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church and St. Aidan's United Church.

Verification of Resolutions

I, _____ (name), Secretary of the Council verify that the following resolutions related to the Proposal for the Amalgamation of St. Aidan's United Church and Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church were passed at the congregational meeting of _____ United Church on (date).

List all motions: moved/seconded/carried.

Dated this ____ day of _____

Vision

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 centre that has built into it income streams, strategies of making a difference in peoples and 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
 - Place-making, 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 and a significant shift in our governance & organizational structure.

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 and 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:

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- 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 TRCs 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 been 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 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.

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- 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 programing, 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 the 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
 - 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.

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- 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.

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

St. Aidan's and Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Church congregations recognize that to continue to flourish and fulfill our mission we must evolve to a new model of being church that remains relevant and effective in the 21st century. We also recognize that we are stronger together and that we need our combined strengths and assets to achieve our goals.

To plan and implement this bold initiative, we will jointly undertake a major project to study and implement this change through:

- Developing a pragmatic plan for the proposed amalgamation of the two congregations including staffing, governance, finances and facilities.
- Assessing the major financial and physical assets to determine the how they can be most effectively used to pursue and achieve our vision.
- Developing small group ministry to allow members to grow in spirituality while building close relationships and developing a local presence across our region.
- Exploring social enterprise opportunities and developing a strategic and viable business model.

In the process we anticipate a shift from being neighbourhood churches to a regional church which can support both the combined congregations as well as being a resource for progressive Christianity across the region.

The two congregations currently have initiatives in the areas of intercultural ministry and reconciliation with First Nations (both of which are priorities for the United Church nationally). The proposed direction will continue to support and further strengthen both of these priorities.

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 will be built. We will be open to the presence of the Spirit on this journey listening for its message as we proceed.

Working Group Reports

In January of 2019, joint council appointed 3 working groups to follow up on items coming from the reVision summit in May of 2018 and subsequent decisions made at the joint council level. They met to research, discuss, gather information and prepared a presentation for June. What follows is the mandate and summary of their work which has been built upon by joint council as we move toward an amalgamation decision.

Asset Management Working Group - Mandate

The mandate of the Asset Management Group provides a wide ranging scope to assess numerous aspects of our assets.

Specifically:

Assess 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 be 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

Membership: Colin Booth – (Chair), Kevin Sing, Ann Churchill, Gordon Robinson, Clare Attwell, Kelly Orr, Cheryl Black and Mark Green

Guidelines and Findings:

The facts and figures that this group collected are found in section 7 so this section highlights some of the other findings of this group.

This group acknowledged, with deep appreciation the generations that built our three churches and the legacy that they passed onto us. Our inheritance from those who have gone before us is rich and we live with gratitude. Therefore; we take the opportunity and the responsibility of reimagining church for our day as a sacred trust.

This group looked at what we have as assets and endeavoured to look at them objectively. This group was mandated to be business like in their approach resisting sentimentality.

This group draws our attention that all three churches have rich connections with the community and some groups have become reliant on the church buildings for gathering space. Any change to this practice will need to be managed well and preferably with the assistance of an external consultant.

The work and information of this group has been a very helpful contribution to the work of the Project Management Team in creating proposals and guidelines and we thank them for their work.

Social Enterprise Working Group - Mandate

The Mandate of this group was to:

- ▶ Explore and investigate what a healthy model of social enterprise might be to bring sustainable revenue streams for the church of the future.
- ▶ To help discern a possible social enterprise that is mission centered and honours sound business practices together with core values that are lived out with integrity.
- ▶ Discern what the current needs of the community/world at large that might be addressed by this social enterprise that will contribute to transformation of individuals and systems in the process of doing business

The membership was: Sarah Bowder (Chair), Scott Morrice, Jean Margison, Paul Malnarich, Julie Ng, Bill Fosdick, Sylvia Campbell, Ron Fisher and Thahsina Karuvetti (student from Royal Roads)

This working group adopted the principles of Lean Startup for Social Change and worked logically and creatively through the steps. They established some guidelines for social enterprises:

- Not limited by location of the church building or to any location
- The enterprise will hire qualified employees and pay fair wages (living wage)
- They will not be restricted to one project
- The projects need to be scalable

The brainstorming and research into possibilities was rich and varied. As a first project they proposed, and the joint boards took action on the franchise opportunity, “Just Like Family”.

This working group will continue to mine for values-based business opportunities for our new congregation and we thank them for their work.

The Pragmatic Possibilities Working Group - Mandate:

Areas of oversight, research and investigation include but are not limited to the following:

- Research what other communities of faith have experimented with within these issues and models of amalgamation that we can learn from ie. Their successes and failures
- Help us start to imagine what the following areas might look like for our communities: Worship and music, staffing models and plans for the next phases, Governance, finance and stewardship, small group ministry models, reconciliation efforts and implication for our work, intercultural grants, grants and articulating our current process and unfolding vision
- Identify and implement possible experiments that we want to try along the way
- Research and identify multiple models related to the issues above that we might want to explore further
- Identify what additional resources and/or staffing might be required

Membership: Susan Draper, Kathryn Berge, Katy Nelson, Trish Schiedel, Tony Smith, Margaret Harper, Betty Anne Dempsey, Mark Green, Cheryl Black

This working group had rich conversations about the culture and practices of each congregation. The emphasis for the 6 months was on a major research project exploring what had been key characteristics of other churches that were either thriving, large membership, amalgamated, regional and/or innovative inside and outside of the United Church of Canada. The work in the specific areas couldn't be accommodated in the time we had and much of the particular work will be completed by the Program Management Group with the assistance of an organizational consultant. Below are the 12 characteristics found in the sample churches. This list will guide what follows and we thank the group for their work and dedication.

Characteristics of an Effective, Progressive, Collaborative Regional Church

1. Mission or Purpose

- Clearly defined but open to evolution as the community discerns its way
- Culture of giving and service to the mission is actively promoted and celebrated.

2. Progressive Theology

- Open minded and hearted attitude
- Evolving understanding of relationship with each other and with the earth
- Diverse ways of connecting with God and/or what is Sacred explored/offered

3. Other Progressive Lens Evident in Life and Work of the Church

- Reconciliation
- Intercultural
- Life-giving
- Justice-making
- Affirming
- Equity/Diversity

4. Partnerships with Other Faith Communities and Community Groups to Create Change in the World

- Serves as a resource centre for smaller churches and faith/community groups
- Promotes systemic change locally, nationally and globally
- Provides a safe place for difficult conversations
- Walks with the poor and vulnerable- listening and responding to their needs in a supportive way
- Collaborates with cultural creatives and artists of all kinds to imagine and produce experiences of hope and transformation

5. Worship

- Inspiring and evolving preaching/teaching
- Music- high calibre, whatever the style
- Worship shared using IT- podcasts, live-streaming, recorded for vimeo/you-tube, etc.
- Opportunities to worship at different times/places during week
- Diverse worship experiences- a blend of ancient tradition, popular culture. contemplative practices, technology, and creative arts

6. Clergy and Staffing

- Ministers are spiritual leaders/teachers in the community, upholding the vision and values of the church and community inside and outside of the church.
- Sufficient paid staff to fulfil all desired functions.
- Volunteers supported by staff; expectations clearly defined.

7. Opportunities to Create Relationship

- Small Groups- affiliation, neighbourhood, and/or companions on the journey. Pastoral care usually happens in these groups, but not necessarily. A place where one can go deeper and make authentic connections.
- Broad variety of activities/projects/events for contribution to church life, mission and engagement with the greater community

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8. Christian Education and Other Kinds of Programs/Training

- All ages and stages provided for
- Support for young families of all configurations offered in diverse ways
- Courses/programs offered that meet an identified need in the greater community,
- Leadership/volunteer training is on-going/built into model

9. Governance

- Grounded in the mission, in service and in relationship
- Proactive, rather than reactive
- Accepts that the future is going to look different than the past or the present, and prepared to innovate and trial ideas when needed
- On-going change-management practices employed, including use of professionals as required
- Nimble, transparent decision-making system
- Regular, ongoing collaboration/consultation with community members
- Church community members trust in the leadership to make decisions for the greater good of the community and its mission in the world.
- Governance structure has two streams – an operations stream that manages the life/work of the church and its building, and a stream that keeps the dream alive, explores new ideas and identifies community challenges and opportunities

10. Financial Sustainability

- Social Enterprise or other revenue stream that reflects the mission and the “economy of Jesus”
- Multi-purpose use of building by other groups (rentals)
- Multiple donation opportunities for individuals offered regularly and without apology.

11. Communication Strategies

- Essential to the mission and how we share our stories, and resourced accordingly.
- Website is accessible and utilized by newcomers and congregation for various purposes, including sharing the message, managing registrations, signing up for courses, newsletters and small groups, etc.
- Social media is embraced and seen as another way to tell stories, build community and share information

12. Building

- Mission determines the building's design and ideally, location. Function fits the form and form fits the function.
- Accessible in all ways

Small Group Ministry

The Development and Implementation of a Small Group Ministry has been identified as a desirable foundational component as we transition to being a Regional United Church with a Progressive Christian voice. (From Neighbourhood to Regional)

In January of 2019, Margaret Harper was contracted to spend 5 hrs/week on the initial phases of research that would position us to proceed with subsequent aspects of project implementation. This contract was entered into partly as an act of faith, knowing that work on the project would need a dedicated amount of staffing prior to knowing whether or not we would be the recipients of a successful ProVision Grant. In mid-June, we were notified that first year funding had been granted. For the first 6 months Margaret's work focused on research; interfacing with the Pragmatic Possibilities working group to deepen each other's understanding; presentations to congregations and the joint board; one on one conversations.

Why Small Group Ministry?

Small groups provide an entry point for newcomers and seekers which is critically imperative at this time in the evolution of 'church'. Small groups offer this entry point in a way in which is both invitational and intentional, yet does not overwhelm. Seekers, newcomers and folks who have been distant or estranged are afforded an immediate place to connect and meet others in a safe, secure and confidential environment. This is a forum where church can be 'tested' with minimal judgment or the expectation that they commit to anything beyond the group presence.

Small groups take seriously the biblical primer: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there." Building on the success of the shared small group experience offered during **reVision** (Fall 2017), small groups comprised initially of folks from St. Aidan's and CBUC will give people a chance to dive in and immediately play a part in the creation of our new entity, *From Neighbourhood to Regional*. The manifestation of this new ministry—right off the bat, will be owned 'jointly' by the participants. In the words of Chris Giffin, the new entity will be "*Neither here, nor there, but among you.*"

What is the Central Purpose of a Small Group Ministry?

Healthy Relationships are at the center of the small group experience. It is within the development of the small group circle where (over time) individuals are able to connect in an intimate atmosphere of safety and trust. Small groups provide the vehicle for **spiritual practice and growth, pastoral care and connection, shared study and action in community**. (Roughly stated, these are the components that we have identified to be operational in every small group AND there will be great flexibility as to how the members negotiate and put these principles into operation.)

Small groups become the center point or **HUB** where individuals learn and experience what it means to live in a complex world as spiritual beings. This hub takes on depth and breadth--a place of learning, growing, questioning, sharing, testing, and evolving as the spiritual journey unfolds. We are fast moving away from the model of church where the Sunday morning worship service is the prime (sole) time and arena for people to have a shared experience as gathering as the body of Jesus Christ. To our detriment, mainstream denominations have been slow off the mark to create multiple opportunities and entry points other than the Sunday gathering. For decades, we have placed the Sunday morning worship as the 'pinnacle' in the week, and for many, this no longer works or fits for any number of reasons. To be clear church can offer opportunities for transformational experiences in and through the sacred in any number of ways!

Many who have availed themselves of the intentional small group experience have found that a small group enables members to ‘*go spiritually deep with others in community.*’ The addition of small groups as a foundational component of our newly amalgamated body takes seriously our mandate to provide multiple ways to grow and learn together all the while supporting one another and the wider world of which we are but one small part.

With experienced small group leadership, small group members will learn to wrestle creatively with conflict, while at the same time, learning how to value and hold respect for one another—even when they disagree. This is a much needed skill to bring to other areas of life, as increasingly people are at a loss for how to have healthy conversations in ever increasingly polarized systems and communities.

While there are a plethora of small group models in existence, at this point, we are proposing that our small groups be open in nature. Meaning that small group circles need to have the capacity to receive new members so they remain inclusive, dynamic and evolving---*Draw the Circle Wide...let this be our song, no one stands alone, standing side by side...*

What do the evangelical churches get right about the nature of small group ministry, and why are the mainstream denominations so late to the party?

For decades, evangelical churches have utilized the small group experience as a prime vessel for church growth, biblical teaching, formation of disciples and evangelism. While the nature of our organizing content and process will be radically different, we would do well to take a page from their honed experience. So, what can we learn?

- Small groups will enable us to value and honour the ‘individual’, by ensuring that there is a place where the individual is noticed, appreciated and given the space to spiritually grow and learn with others in community. Jesus was a master at this—people felt seen, heard, valued and *loved into being* in his presence. Jesus extends this invitation to us: *To accept unconditionally. To love wholeheartedly. To encourage others to be all they can be!* However, this ‘honouring’ of the individual will be very different from the conservative, individual right wing Christian agenda where the rights and freedoms of the individual trump others at all cost. Individuals will learn that we are indeed stronger when we come together, and afforded intentional opportunities to grow and learn in relationship with others.
- Small group leaders are equipped with substantive, ongoing training so they feel confident enough at the beginning to honour their inherent skills, even as they feel safe to experiment, to fail, to regroup, to celebrate their successes and to learn along the way. **Education, encouragement and mentoring will be key as we prepare to launch this ministry.**

What is required to transition from being a church that has ‘small groups’ to a ‘church of small groups’?

Understanding and teasing apart this distinction took up a lot of concerted time, both within the Pragmatic Possibilities Working Group, and in conversation with many individuals, and **it will continue to need intentional unpacking as we move into this next phase.** It is a difficult concept to grasp indeed, the UCC prides itself upon the understanding that for decades we have been able to meet the needs of many through a variety of small groups.

Rev. Kevin Watson [United Methodist Church] helps to unpack the difference between Affinity Groups (people getting together for an activity) Information Groups (people getting together to learn) and Groups that are TRANSFORMATION driven.....and while we may not utilize the phrase ‘creation of disciples’, Watson says....*The best small groups for forming disciples, are transformation driven. I think [These groups provide] the need that every person has for meaningful connection and an appropriate place to be deeply known.*” And while many of our current small groups contain some of the components that we are striving to incorporate—very few have the structure that will afford the vehicle for what we are attempting to achieve overall.

In Summation:

We need to recognize that we are in a unique position to try something both radically new and old at the same time. Encouragement of laity is key as we risk, learn and grow this program in the next many months, particularly in the beginning stages.

Not only are the roots of small group ministry found within the early Christian house churches, what we are proposing is also along the lines of what the UCW groups (United Church Women) modelled for years. They met together—sharing food for body and soul...each meeting contained a devotional, as well as a yearly mission study (with an action component). They were part of a larger congregational body, yet exercised and nurtured their relationships in a small group setting. They exemplified what it meant to offer healthy pastoral care for each other, because of the relationships they had built and nurtured through the years. All the while sustained through the Spirit of the Living God.

Moving Forward:

The second part of the Small Group Implementation requires additional staff time and the grant application included a movement toward a .5 ministry position to help prepare the congregations, train leaders, discern the format and shape of the small groups and begin the task of transitioning folks both currently involved and those who are new or on the margins into such groups. This is no small task but will be accomplished over time as people are willing to try something new at the onset or perhaps wait till they hear about others experiences before they enter into it themselves.

Timeline for Introduction

Formation of Small Group Support Circle	October 2019
Continuation of research	October 2019
Pilot survey (Step 1) to garner feedback for congregational survey (Step 2)	October-November 2019 (Pilot) January 2020 (congregational)
Communication and Interpretation of Program to Congregations	October-Ongoing
Discern, Identify & Approach Small Group Leaders	November- January 2020
Develop Training Program for Small Group Leaders	November-January 2020
Roll Out of Small Group Program	February 2020-Ongoing
Visibility & Accessibility of Small Group Coordinator on both campuses	January 2020 (possibly sooner)
Evaluation: Small Group Leaders Training	January, 2020 and ongoing
Evaluation: Small Group Participants	April-June, 2020 (Initial groups) and ongoing

Social Enterprise

Goals and Rationale for the Future:

All charitable organizations across Canada and around the world are experiencing major shifts in the way in which they fund themselves. Changing demographics, giving patterns, understanding of philanthropy and available donor dollars are all putting charities in a position that they have to rethink how they will be sustainable. The church is no exception.

Going forward, we knew that we would have to have multiple income streams to make the venture economically sustainable. And while fundraisers and donations have been and will continue to be important sources of revenue, new consistent income streams will be important in the future. Social enterprise is one of those new shifts in approach that we are looking to embrace.

Social Enterprise might be defined as follows:

Social enterprises are revenue-generating businesses with a twist. Whether operated by a non-profit organization or by a for-profit company, a social enterprise has two goals: to achieve social, cultural, community economic and/or environmental outcomes; and, to earn revenue. Social enterprise applies an entrepreneurial approach to addressing social issues and creating positive community change.

On the surface, many social enterprises look, feel, and even operate like traditional businesses. But looking more deeply, one discovers the defining characteristics of the social enterprise: mission is at the centre of business, with income generation playing an important supporting role (from The Centre for Community Enterprise).

Another important consideration was using a lean start up model that would enable us to learn and grow in our business expertise without a huge investment of capital. Many new business ventures fail in the first 6 months because of the risks and financial weight in that initial time period. The ability to move into a business model where the business was scalable also became an important consideration, strategy and value.

Aligning our values with finding a way to make a difference and make a profit that can support other elements of ministry and mission is key for us going forward. As the Social Enterprise group worked through their list of values, addressing isolation and supporting those in life transitions were often top of the list in relationship to business ideas.

After extensive research about various homecare and senior support services, a local west coast Canadian business opportunity that was relationship based and scalable emerged into our sightlines. It was thoroughly investigated, a projected business plan developed and legal avenues discerned. We consulted with the national church who were enthusiastic about the direction we were moving and saw this as important new ground. The idea and project was handed over to the joint council for their discernment and approval and the decision was made to move forward and take the next step. Much work with lawyers, franchise owner, and others ensued over the summer months until we were finally ready to invest through our numbered company in the franchise. A board of directors was named, papers signed and unveiled to the congregation at the beginning of October. JUST LIKE FAMILY is our first foray into the social enterprise world and we are excited to have taken this first step.

Just Like Family

Board of Directors

Wanda Walker
Sarah Bowder
Kathryn Clinton

Advisors to the Board

Mark Green
Cheryl Black
Scott Morrice

An Introduction to St. Aidan's and Cadboro Bay United Churches' First Joint Social Enterprise



What is a Social Enterprise?

A social enterprise is defined as a for profit business that has specific social objectives that serve its primary purpose. Social enterprises seek to maximize profits while maximizing benefits to society and/or the environment.

Why are St. Aidan's and Cadboro Bay United Churches investing in a Social Enterprise?

In 2018, as an outcome of the process of reVision and exploring amalgamation, a working group was formed to look at opportunities for investing together in social enterprises that would meet both the need to expand our churches' revenue streams and provide a service in the community that is in line with our Christian values.

After much research, the working group made a proposal to the Joint Councils to invest in the franchise, *Just Like Family Home Care*. In August 2019, the Joint Councils appointed CBUC and St. Aidan's members, Sarah Bowder, Wanda Walker and Kathryn Clinton, to form a board to oversee the operations of this social enterprise.

How does *Just Like Family Home Care* meet this criteria?

Just Like Family Home Care (JLF) is an ethically run, successful business franchise based in Vancouver. JLF that has been providing relationship based personal care, companionship and support for seniors and others in need for over 9 years. The JLF franchise, based in Victoria, will benefit not only the seniors in our community, but also caregivers of all ages who will be able to find work with flexible hours at a living wage.



JLF meets the criteria of a profitable business and a way to live our churches' key values of compassion, empathy and inclusion for those in need in our community.

How can I help support this social enterprise?

Since *Just Like Family Home Care* is an **investment** and not a church program, our congregations are not directly involved in the operation of the company. You can help by spreading the word in the community about JLF services. The company will be hiring in the next few weeks and is planning to offer services in Victoria by January 2020. For more information on the company and their services, go to www.justlikefamily.ca

Assets

a. Land and Buildings

Professional appraisers have valued our properties as follows:

St. Aidan's \$3,000,000 (May 2019)

Cadboro Bay \$2,200,000 (March 2016)*

Gordon Head \$1,800,000(March 2016)*

*these appraisal values are from 3 years ago. Current value is likely to be higher by 10% or more.

Our properties are zoned "assembly" which allows churches, schools, daycares, libraries, recreation facilities and similar purposes. This is the typical zoning for church properties. Within this zoning we could expand/redevelop an existing property for church use.

b. Financial Investments

In addition to real property assets, our congregations have financial assets as at Dec. 31, 2018 of approximately:

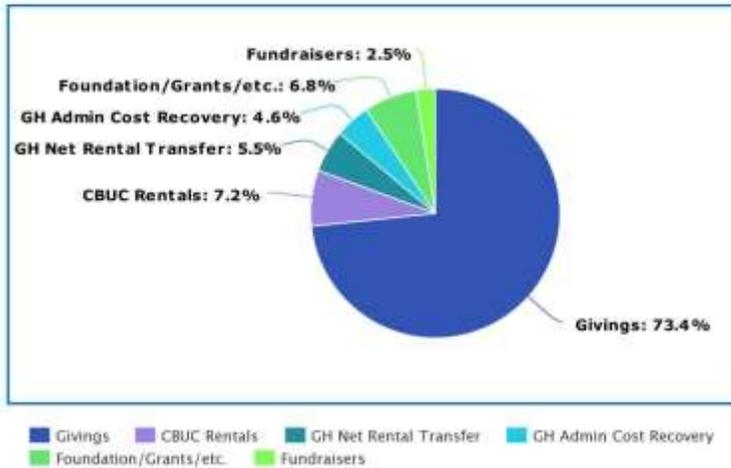
St. Aidan's: \$258,000+

Cadboro Bay: \$250,000 – (\$200,000 of which is held by the Cadboro Bay United Church Foundation)

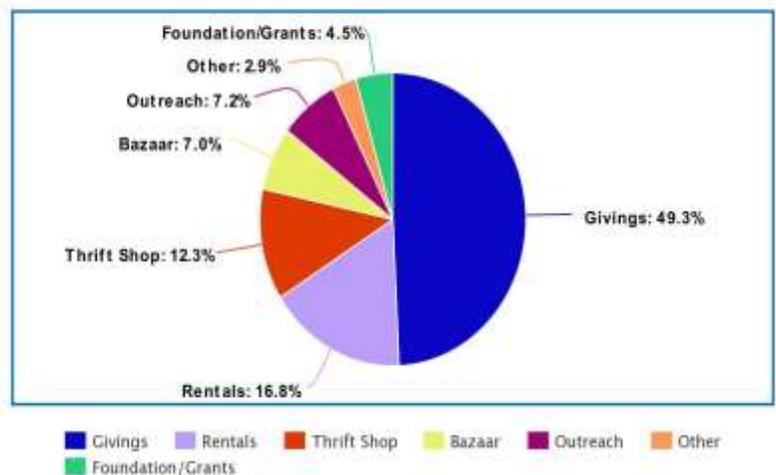
c. additional sources of revenue

Both congregations have an annual operating budget of approximately \$500,000 per year for a total of \$1M. These budgets are met in different ways in each congregation as illustrated by the graphs below.

CBUC REVENUE – 2017



ST. AIDAN'S REVENUE - 2017



St. Aidan's United & Cadboro Bay/Gordon Head United Churches Amalgamation Report

Not all of these current revenue streams will remain the same after amalgamation or into the future. Approximately 25% of the current donations in each congregation come from those 80 years of age and older. Rental income and fundraising income will change in the future as well.

New revenue streams of bequests, social enterprise profits, grants and partnership leases will help us to diversify our income into the future.

d. Strengths and Passions of Each Congregation:

Each congregation brings into the amalgamation equal but different strengths and passions. Neither congregation is dying but rather aware that we can do more together than we can separate.

St Aidan's brings to the table:

- An established thrift store and integrated connection with other community organizations
- Active lay leadership and well organized volunteer led events
- Multiple choirs including a midweek children's choir
- Strong commitment to social justice, hospitality, spiritual growth, affirm status and outreach
- Creative intercultural ministry experience and leadership
- Well stocked and managed library
- Proven record in fund raising activities

Cadboro Bay brings to the table:

- Dynamic website and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Integrated technology in worship, communication, pastoral care
- Comprehensive children, youth, young adults and family ministry program
- Strong leadership and history in reconciliation and decolonization education
- Diverse adult programming
- Spiritual companions eldering program
- Commitment to social justice and outreach

e. Staffing

Both congregations are well served by the staff that serve the congregation at this present time. Continuity of the staff will be maintained while job descriptions may change to remove duplications and allow for gaps to be filled. At the present time both congregations have a full time lead minister who has been called. Both congregations have part time clergy appointed to oversee pastoral care. In addition, both congregations have multiple musicians who provide leadership, contract staff that provides leadership for children, youth, young adult and family ministry, office administration and bookkeeping and custodial care. Staffing cost form a major part of both congregation's budgets and are also a major asset for each.

Intercultural and Reconciliation Emphasis

A. Current Work in Learning to Become an Intercultural Church

Both congregations are aware that we have been very white middle class congregations historically. While we use language that shows a desire to be welcoming and diverse, we often are unaware of the ways we unintentionally create barriers for those who come from other cultures or for whom English is not their first language. As the make up of our city and country becomes more diverse, we are called to rise to the challenge to become more intercultural in our approach and in our leadership.

In 2016, St Aidan's applied for a grant to begin an intercultural ministry which has included both outreach to the intercultural community through ESL and other programs. It has also sought to offer intercultural workshops and experiences to its members on a monthly basis and found ways to integrate the intercultural community into some areas of its life and work. In 2018 CBUC joined in that process and monthly workshops with a strong turnout began once a month after Sunday worship and lunch. Both congregations have been learning what it means to see the world through another person's eyes, culture and experience.

A recent report to St Aidan's by a group of intercultural business students hired to look at their congregation through that lens has made a number of recommendations of possible ways to be more welcoming and of ways to be of service to and with new immigrants and those coming from other cultures to Victoria. These learnings will be incorporated into the new ministry plan and staffing model as we move forward.

B. Current Work in Learning to be a Church that takes the Call to Reconciliation Seriously.

Both congregations have a commitment to land and territory acknowledgement at the beginning of all that they do in public life. Each is committed to learning more about what it means to be involved in the reconciliation movement in adopting the calls to the church from the TRC.

In 2006, CBUC made a very conscious decision to be involved in what would later become known as the reconciliation movement. Building on the apologies of the United Church to First Nations communities for residential schools and for our participation in the genocide of their culture, they embarked on relationship building and educational programs to widen the circle of people knowledgeable of our role as individuals and as a church in the colonization of indigenous peoples. Over the last 12+ years they have been leaders in the presbytery in hosting learning events, securing grants, hosting theatre groups and working with Indigenous leaders to forge new ways of being in community together. Tough conversations have happened in what has been experienced by members of both communities as a safe place to do this work.

CBUC was present when the TRC came to Victoria in 2012 as witnesses to listen to the stories of those who suffered at residential schools. Over 40 members of CBUC attended for some or all of the commission's work here in Victoria. They have hosted the blanket exercise a number of times as well as the deepening workshop that is a follow up of a day long experience called "The Villages"; more than 80 people participated in that pivotal event as well.

A significant portion of our local outreach dollars support Indigenous partners in the pursuit for justice. A recent court case won by the Beaver Lake Cree supported by RAVEN, one of CBUC's partners, released a press release with the following words: *To run a national campaign in support of Beaver Lake Cree RAVEN has teamed up with some amazing partners! The Leap, Cadboro Bay United Church, ENvironnement JEUnesse, Justice Climatique Montréal et Climate Justice Edmonton: we couldn't have done it without you!*

St. Aidan's involvement with living out the TRC recommendations has been more haphazard than systematic over the years. A group attended the TRC in Victoria and was moved by the stories. Connections were made after that with First Nations People but often in the form of crafting. The youth group were taught by an elder how to do felting and under her leadership made a Christmas nativity set which is still in use. There has been a

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drumming workshop, a Sunday speaker from the Songhees Wellness Centre, a congregational tour of the Songhees Wellness Centre in Esquimalt, as well as a congregational bus trip to the Quw'utsun Cultural Centre in the Cowichan Valley. They are looking forward to having a more systematic approach to living out the TRC recommendations with CBUC.

C. Lining Up with the Two New Mandates of the National Church

Intercultural: In its newest document entitled "Vision for becoming an Intercultural church" these words are found: *God exists in community, and we are invited to be in community together. Being an intercultural church means living together with a respectful awareness of each other's differences. We do this by examining ourselves, building relationships, and distributing power fairly.*

Individually and in community, we do everything through the lenses of our cultures: there is no such thing as a culture-free perspective. Our experiences and understandings are shaped by our cultures. Since we cannot capture the complexity of God through our limited cultural understandings, our understanding of God is limited when we see this God through only one dominant cultural perspective. Instead, our understandings of God and our scriptures can be deepened when we come together, as disciples of Jesus Christ, in all of our differences and diversities to acknowledge intercultural reality and richness.

We strive to become an intercultural church to deepen our understandings and experiences of God and of one another. Within the United Church, a variety of cultural expressions of faith are affirmed and welcomed. Part of the vision of the intercultural church is to create a space where we can sustain our own cultural identities while also affirming those of one another.

St Aidan's has been ahead of the curve in the contracting with Julie Ng and beginning the work at integrating folks into the life and work of the church. CBUC has engaged wholeheartedly and going forward as an amalgamated community of faith, we will make this aspect of what it means to be a diverse community a new priority. Like the national church, we will use this lens to evaluate what we are doing, decisions we are making and leadership we are asking to sit at the table as we move forward. In our new staffing model, intercultural ministry will have an important function and we will seek to align ourselves with the national church strategy on this. We have the foundation on which to build.

Reconciliation: The calls to the church emerged from a process of discernment by the Indigenous church as The United Church of Canada as a whole discerned a way forward, following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Under the guidance of the Aboriginal Ministries Council (now the National Indigenous Council), the Caretakers of Our Indigenous Circle, a group of Indigenous leaders from across The United Church of Canada, gathered throughout 2016 and 2017 and gave oversight to consultations with Indigenous communities of faith during that same period. Calls to the church were the result of these conversations. Calls to the church articulates the Indigenous Church's vision for the ongoing development of Indigenous Peoples' mission and ministry and communities of faith within The United Church of Canada. It outlines pathways for the whole church to continue to walk in the Spirit of Christ toward justice, healing, and reconciliation.

There are many recommendations, some of them specific to the work of the national church and some of them related to the everyday work of communities of faith (you can read them all online united-church.ca). Many of them are about relationship building and about decolonizing our theology, language and way of being. These are important steps that CBUC has been on the leading edge in what was Victoria Presbytery. We again have a foundation on which to build. One of the calls to the church in this document is a sharing of wealth when land sales and transfers take place. This has been affirmed also by the region and we will faithfully need to engage this as we leverage our property assets if we want the land acknowledgements we make each Sunday to remain authentic.

Tasks and Decisions Still to Unfold After the Vote

a. Naming of the New Congregation

A new name for the newly amalgamated congregation will need to be discerned and voted on by the joint congregation. A process to illicit ideas and find creative ways to name the new regional church in a way that will make sense to both those who currently belong and (perhaps more importantly) to those who are outside the church or unfamiliar with the united church will be important. This is no easy task but will be an important one moving forward.

b. Distilling Purpose and Mission in More Succinct Way

While the comprehensive vision statement (From Neighbourhood to Regional: A New Platform for a 21st Century Church) that was voted upon at the respective AGM's at the beginning of 2019 contain all the elements that are guiding this process; there is a need to distill some of the elements into a more succinct statement and draw out the mission and purposes in concrete ways. We will work with an outside consultant who will help us and lead us in a process.

c. New Governance Model

Both congregations have strong governance but moving forward we will need a new model to help us achieve a new way of being. There are many different models for us to choose from, some that we know and others that we are less familiar with. Whatever model we choose must have the support and approval of the Regional Council of the UCC. We will be working with a consultant to help us design a new model using the best practices currently available that also match our vision, purpose and goals as a church.

d. New Staffing Model

Both congregations have good and competent ministerial staff. While job descriptions will change, there will be a place in the new model for each of the current 4. However, there will also be a need for additional program staff to meet the goals and mission of the new church. The design of the new staffing model will be tied to the new budget that is developed which will be looking at the multiple streams of incomes and expenses moving forward. On the effective date of the Amalgamation (May 31st, 2020), the current staff will be appointed until Dec 31, 2020 and then the new congregation will vote on the new staffing model and the staff to be called together before the end of the appointments. Our consultant will also be helping us through this task as well.

e. New Home - Building Reno/Design

The new design for our new church home will be the most fun part of this process. Imagining the possibilities to meet the new goals, mission, staffing models, worship and program needs and community partners involved will be a dynamic process. There will be room for lots of input, imagination and dreaming as we go forward. The involvement of several professionals to take our ideas and "napkin drawings" to a place where permits, architectural drawings and builders can be engaged will require the work of many. There will be several votes along the way by the new congregation to approve both designs and budgets related to this part of the amalgamation.

f. Reallocating and Leveraging Assets with a 5+ Year Plan for the Future Congregation

As per section 7, we have been blessed with many assets that we will need to discern wisely. What the best way forward is to leverage these and maintain a legacy for future generations as well. In addition to these assets are the social enterprise revenues, the legacy gifts and bequests, the ongoing sustaining donations of our congregation and income from our partners and grants. All of these will need to be balanced with the goals of the new congregation and the budget requirements to be sustainable. We will also be needing to consult and work with the Pacific Mountain Region who have oversight over some of the property assets and gain their support and approval. A comprehensive 5- 7 year budget will be presented to the new congregation as we get clearer about some of the other interfacing issues above.

g. Community Partnership Engagement

Moving forward we will need to be intentional about not living in an isolated bubble but rather engaged in a shared mission with other community partners. Some of those partners may reside with us in our location and others may not. An authentic relationship where we are engaged in the overlaps of our shared mission and supportive of the parts that are unique to one another will be key to our diversity and new identity in the future. We have begun some of the conversations with potential partnership and will be pursuing these further after the vote has occurred to obtain MOA's (memorandums of understanding) in the new year.

h. Affirm Status

Both congregations are LGBTQ2 affirming and positive but St Aidan's has completed the process to get their Affirming status and designation. CBUC has been in contact about what they need to do to complete the process to become designated and this will happen in the new year before the amalgamation date. Therefore this joint status will follow us both in the amalgamation and be applied to the new congregation.

i. Third Space

Third Space is a concept related to creating spaces where people want to gather that is not their home or work space but is a comfortable place to congregate. For many, places like coffee shops or community art spaces etc have begun to fulfil that function. Third space is a concept that we want to explore more and shape our mission and ministry to include the creation of a welcoming, inclusive and safe space that can become a third space for many and a gateway into the life of our community of faith. Some ideas are being played with and some research has been done. More research is needed and is underway and these insights will offer input to the design of our new church space.