

MEDIA ADVISORY

December 10, 2019

Amalgamating to Build a Movement for Change

Victoria, BC On Sunday, November 24, 2019, Cadboro Bay United Church (CBUC) and St. Aidan's United Church voted to bring their two communities together in order to create a fresh, new approach to church in the Capital Regional District.

"Typically, churches amalgamate because their membership is declining or their financial health is poor. But that's not what happened here," Cheryl Black, lead minister at St. Aidan's stated. "Both churches felt they could offer a lot more to the greater community and to the world, if they could re-imagine their purpose and what they might potentially offer in partnership with other community groups. This new expression will be a regional United Church for Saanich/Gordon Head, but it will be more than that. Community hub seems to describe it best at this time."

Just at the start of their new story together, there is much work to do and many decisions to be made. Building and staffing configuration are still to be determined but over the next three years, this progressive Christian community is confident they will bring their vision to life.

One small part of their vision has already been realized: the two churches have invested in a social enterprise as a means of becoming less dependent on member donations and as a way of living out their values. [Just Like Family Home Care](#) is home care for seniors, an on-going need in greater Victoria.

This new vision will include but not be limited to the following:

- 1) a focus on accompanying people on their diverse spiritual paths, realizing there are many ways to experience or explore what is sacred, and that all human beings are worthy of love;
- 2) an approach that welcomes everyone into this fresh expression of church life, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, race, levels of income, and physical or mental challenges. Inclusion and diversity will continue to be core values.
- 3) a commitment to further explore what it means to be an intercultural community of faith, as well as to walk the path of Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Decolonizing our thinking, behaviours, and policies will be on-going and rigorous.
- 4) an emphasis on building a movement for social and ecological justice by working with diverse community partners including non-profits, artists, and others who support our vision and values.

"In a climate emergency, we need to unite behind the science and then begin the task of changing everything. And that includes institutions like churches," Mark Green, lead minister at CBUC, suggested "With this decision, St. Aidan's and CBUC are in a good place to do that work and shift priorities as needed. I believe this evolving regional church will play a role in our collective challenge to transform society. Climate heating is scary, but together, we can do more to mitigate and adapt to our rapidly changing world."

140 years ago, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church planted a seed called St. Aidan's.
60 years ago, First Metropolitan United planted a seed called CBUC.

This initial support of the downtown churches for these two neighbourhood churches, the generations of faithful people who devoted their time and talents to sustaining them, and the financial contributions and encouragement from the national United Church of Canada, have made this bold amalgamation possible today. We are grateful and humbled by their trust.

With this larger re-imagined church, there will be more to offer- more worship services and diverse community gatherings, more small groups to join, more opportunities for service, education and celebration. This is good news for all who seek deeper relationships, greater meaning and purpose, and reconnection with the web of life.

For more information visit: www.cadbayuc.org or www.staidansunited.ca

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