

A Vision for a New United Church in West Surrey and North Delta

Background

On October 27, the congregations of Royal Heights United Church and St. John's Strawberry Hill United Church met together to discern if God had a vision in store that would compel us to amalgamate. This God-inspired day was marked by a spirit of enthusiasm and openness for new ways of being the United Church in our neighbourhood. Building on the hope and energy of the day, a group of representatives from both congregations was asked to articulate a common vision from the material that was produced.

Proposed Vision

An intergenerational community following Jesus Christ: inviting and welcoming the stranger, moving with the Holy Spirit, and practicing faithful stewardship of our gifts and resources.

We will be a community that intentionally makes space for people of all ages who are seeking to follow Jesus Christ. We will be a place of nurture and support for each other as we walk together, deepening our faith. Worship that is faithful, uplifting, and challenging will be central to our community.

We will actively invite and welcome people into this community through a variety of entry points. In worship, in fellowship, in our work and in our structures we will practice hospitality to the stranger, seeking to share the source of our hope and faith.

Our church will be a place of listening for and responding to the prodding of the Holy Spirit, both in people's own lives and in our life together, as we seek to be present to the ever-changing wider community around us.

God has richly blessed us. We will assist each other to discern and use our spiritual gifts. Together, we will practice faithful stewardship of our gifts and resources. Our church - its building, its property, and its people - will be for the benefit of the community, a place where the grace of God in Jesus Christ is felt and seen.

Process of Joint Vision Articulating Team:

Members of the Team: From Royal Heights: Sean Birt, Wynn Machin, Doug Shorter
 From St. John's: Liz Czerwinski, Jason Hodgins, Pam Shaw

Our Process:

The team met a total of five times, and also did email work between meetings.

In its task of articulating a proposed vision, the team used all of the information that was generated at the Saturday, October 27th visioning event. We began by categorizing every statement recorded in the notes from the morning session, as well as all of the responses recorded on the brainstorming sheets from the afternoon table groups. The categories we created, and the number of responses in each, is set out in the attached document entitled *Vision Renewal Categorization*. (“Inward Vision” and “Outward Vision” were the two categories the table groups worked with.)

We then began with the categories that contained the highest number of comments, and set about articulating some common themes that summed up the individual responses generated at the Saturday event. Summary bullets are shown in the table below, in rough order from most responses to fewest responses (“Mission” had two more responses than “Evangelism”).

<p>1. Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strengthening connections -intergenerational -opportunities to be involved -supporting each other 	<p>2. Faith Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -open to the spirit -individuals deepening their faith -respectful of each individuals faith journey
<p>3. Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -responsive to the community -let our building and physical presence be a gift to our neighbours 	<p>4. Evangelism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -intentional invitation -multiple entry points -sharing core of who we are
<p>5. Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -stewardship of resources 	<p>6. Worship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -accessibility

When looking at the categories with fewer responses, we noticed that the themes present in the smaller categories fit nicely into the summary bullets in the larger categories that we had already named. This is why there are no summary bullets for the two smallest categories (“Education” and “Justice”).

The next step was to craft a vision that would reflect these summary bullets. We decided that the most useful format would be to begin with a short statement and then expand upon it. The vision that we are proposing is the final result of these efforts.

Congregational Meeting to discuss this proposed vision will be on February 10th.

January 2008

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