

## Summary of HHUC Amalgamation Process – as of July 2018

**From 2016 HHPC Annual Report:** “Since the mid-1960’s there were signs that church membership was declining at the national level. Starting about 2005 the various Chairs of the Highland Hills Pastoral Charge have been identifying that the current arrangement of the Pastoral Charge and the three Churches is not sustainable due to decreasing financial support and a dwindling source of volunteers in each of the three Congregations.

In late 2014, your Official Board discussed a vision of one Congregation with three Preaching Places. This one Congregation would have to decide how best to utilize our resources.

In 2015, various steps were taken to get the three Congregations worshipping and working together, such as joint services and having some of the committees working together. Major proposed changes were announced at that time to the United Church’s organizational structure which distracted your Official Board and nothing else was done.

In September 2015 your Official Board decided that in order to cope with the proposed UCC changes the Pastoral Charge should not wait and allow outside forces to decide our destiny. Therefore, they decided to create a Transformation Planning Group to find ways to streamline our governance and find a way to move forward. Each of the Congregations voted to participate in these discussions.

...Charge Transformation Planning Group started to hold group discussions in December 2015 and these discussions were held over the spring of 2016 with ever increasing attendance. Over the summer, information meetings were held with each congregation and as part of these meetings a vote was taken as to how to proceed. 80% of attendees said they were comfortable to have a vote on amalgamation in the fall of 2016. On August 18<sup>th</sup>, Rev Bob Root lead a gathering to identify what we, as a Charge congregation, had as a vision for our future.

On October 23, 2016 a vote by members of each congregation was taken to decide the future course for each church in relation to its sister churches... The results are as follows; Maple Lake – 33% in favour, Minden 95% in favour, Zion 82% in favour... The amalgamation of Minden and Zion congregations is scheduled to take place formally on January 1, 2018...

As a result of this vote the Official Board in November established an Integration Committee to lead the amalgamation of Minden and Zion congregations while continuing our support of our sister congregation at Maple Lake...”

**-From 2017 HHPC Annual Report:** “...At the Charge Annual General Meeting in March 2017, we chose a new name for the new combined church, Highland Hills United Church. At that time, we also agreed on a new governance structure that combines the boards of the Pastoral Charge and Highland Hills United Church into one Unified Board...

The congregational meeting held on Sunday November 19, 2017 represented a great deal of background work...Highland Hills United Church is well positioned for January 1, 2018 with Unified Board officers, trustees, committee members, bank accounts and signing authorities in place having been approved by the congregation.

The Building Assessment Committee did a careful assessment of the buildings of Minden and Zion United Churches. The committee findings were made available to the congregations and there was a Question and Answer session after the joint service in Minden on September 17, 2017.

Given how challenging it is for us to decide which building to use for the future, our approach will be to worship “month about” between Zion and Minden UCs beginning in January 2018 and evaluate the buildings and locations throughout the coming months. We will seek input from the congregation for this evaluation. The decision about when to stop using one building is up to the congregation – there is not a “hard” deadline. BUT – the longer we use two buildings, the longer we are paying for the upkeep of two structures.”

## Chronology

2007 – Long-term Plan completed for Zion because of annual financial deficits making the long-term unsustainable

2008 – Team Zion focused on working together to cement the feeling of family and to reach out to the community

2013 – Zion established another Planning Committee because in spite of efforts by Team Zion, attendance at worship had not increased and we continued to run deficits and energy for fund-raising was running out

Fall 2014 – Official Board approved Zion's proposal that the Zion Planning Committee become a charge-wide committee reporting to the Official Board.

December 7, 2015; January 25, 2016; February 15, 2016; March 6, 2015; May 30, 2016; July 11, 2016 - Transformation Planning Group Meetings

July, 2016 - Planning Group information and discussion sessions after church in each of Maple Lake (July 17, 2016), Minden (July 24, 2016) and Zion (July 31, 2016). Polls taken at each re: potential timing of vote to unite congregations.

August 18, 2016 - Visioning session led by Rev. Bob Root

October 23, 2016 – Amalgamation vote held on the question “Whereas... The intention to amalgamate the three churches decision will be made on this the 23 of October 2016, the details will be finalized prior to amalgamation on January 1, 2018. I understand that if only two churches choose to join together, that those two churches will actively move forward together. I understand that Presbytery will be part of our deliberations from now on. I understand that there will be an intention to actively move forward together in developing proposals toward the amalgamation of the churches by the end of 2017, while giving time for hearing the heart centred concerns of both members and adherents. I am in favour of amalgamation. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_”. Results were Maple Lake 33% in favour, Minden 95% in favour, and Zion 82% in favour.

March 22, 2017 - New governance structure and new name (Highland Hills United Church) approved at Charge AGM

May 13, 2017 – Visioning #2 session led by Rev. Bob Root

Spring/summer 2017 – Building Assessment Committee assessed buildings at both Minden and Zion, prepared and circulated report and summary

June 16, 2017 – Congregational letter re: Integration Update

September 17, 2017 – Discussion session with Building Assessment Committee to present information and answer questions re: their findings (session held after joint worship service)

November 19, 2017 – Joint Zion and Minden congregational meeting held after joint worship service to elect 2018 officers etc. for charge and HHUC

January 1, 2018 – Zion and Minden amalgamation takes place, “month about” worship services begin

Beginning January 1, 2018, Monthly evaluations completed – Summaries prepared for January-February and March-April

June 24, 2018 – Readiness vote held on the question “Is the congregation of Highland Hills United Church ready to decide which of its two buildings shall become its permanent home?”. Results were that 51 people voted in favour of moving ahead, 22 people voted no.

July 4, 2018 – Congregational letter re: Amalgamation Update and Building Selection Vote

July 30 and August 7, 2018 – Amalgamation Information and Discussion Sessions

Planned: Building selection vote on Sunday September 16, 2018