

Congregational Update

April 17, 2025

Task Group Meeting at Fort Massey

The Task Group met on April 9th at Fort Massey to discuss the Worship Consultation held on April 6th. The meeting focused on:

- Reviewing both the design of the consultation and what was learned
- Evaluating what went well with the format and what could be improved for future sessions
- Processing the feedback received during the worship consultation.

Worship Consultation Feedback

During the April 6th consultation, approximately 70 people with representation from all three congregations gathered at St. Andrew's to explore worship. Some of the key themes which emerged from these discussions were:

Common Elements Valued in Worship:

- Meaningful relationships and community based on faith.
- Variety of musical styles (but intentionally programmed).
- Relevant, challenging messages.
- Opportunities for reflection and quietude.
- Inclusivity and welcoming atmosphere.
- A feeling of being "home" and of "belonging".

Space Considerations:

- Space should function as a sanctuary first but be flexible
- Accessibility is essential
- Natural light, connection to nature, and aesthetics are important
- Iconography (cross, stained glass) helps create sacred atmosphere
- Warmth and a sense of belonging are crucial elements

All feedback from the worship consultation was shared with a Worship Working Group with representation from all congregations. This group will provide their input to the task group regarding key themes that emerged from the consultation.

The Task Group also discussed:

- Upcoming Congregational Survey: To be conducted by Narrative Research. The design of this survey will be discussed in future Task Group meetings.

- Programming Consultation: Preparations for the upcoming Programming Consultation at Fort Massey on April 13th were reviewed.

Programming Consultation - A Full House at Fort Massey – April 13th, 2025

Fort Massey's Lower Hall was full to the brim for our second congregational consultation which focused on programming.

The introduction included these remarks: *"Programming is a vital part of who we are as a church. It's how we serve the needs of our congregations through faith formation, pastoral care, community life, and affirming ministries. It's an inward-facing expression of our mission, helping us to grow spiritually, connect with one another, and support those within our faith community. Today's consultation is designed to help us explore what programming means to each of us. We want to hear from you about the programs and activities that have been most meaningful in your experience, the values that should guide our programming, and how we can envision programming that will serve us well as a unified church."*

More specifically, for the purposes of the consultation programming was defined as: inward facing, serving the needs and interests of the church community through:

- **Faith formation:** Bible study, Sunday School, and other educational programs aimed at spiritual growth.
- **Pastoral care**
- **Community life/work:** Activities that foster a sense of community within the church and may include internal initiatives or work done by the congregation.
- **Affirming:** ministries focused on inclusivity and support for specific groups within or connected to the church

Attendees engaged in thoughtful discussion around:

- Examples of meaningful and impactful programming they've been part of
- Core principles or elements that should guide programming
- How physical space impacts or plays a role in successful programming
- What programming we could create together that we can't create alone



The output from this session will be shared with a Programming Working Group with representation from all three congregations.

We invite all members of St. Andrew's, St. Matthew's, and Fort Massey United Churches to attend our final open consultation session on Outreach, at **St Matthew's United Church on April 27th, 2025, at 12pm**. These sessions are an important opportunity to share your insights, ideas, and priorities as we work together to create a vibrant, sustainable, and unified future.

Thank You

As we move forward, we are committed to keeping you informed and engaged. Your voice matters, and together, we can create a stronger, more vibrant future for our church community. We invite you to participate fully in this journey and share your questions and feedback as we explore the possibilities ahead.

Sincerely,

The Amalgamation Charter Task Group