

FORT MASSEY SAINT ANDREW'S SAINT MATTHEW'S
Amalgamation Charter Task Group

From Christ the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
Ephesians 4:16

Congregational Update

March 3, 2025

Our First Meeting

On January 24, 2025, the Amalgamation Charter Task Group convened for the first time. This group, representing members from Fort Massey, St. Andrew's, St. Matthew's churches, is committed to exploring the possibility of amalgamation to strengthen and unify our collective ministry.

Who Are We?

The Amalgamation Charter Task Group is composed of representatives from each of the three churches, bringing diverse perspectives and experiences. The group is supported by input from clergy, who will be consulted as needed throughout the process.

Members of the Task Group:

Ken Burt - Saint Andrew's	kenburt13@icloud.com
Janet Hulford – Saint Matthew's	jhulford@eastlink.ca
Darrel Johnston - Saint Andrew's	darrelljohnston01@gmail.com
Tim Matthews – Saint Matthew's	tmatthews@stewartmckelvey.com
Ken Moors – Saint Matthew's	kenmoors@outlook.com
James Robertson – Fort Massey	james.robertson@ns.sympatico.ca
April Stroink - Saint Andrew's	aprilstroink73@gmail.com
Clay Tuck – Fort Massey	C14tuck@gmail.com
John Walter – Fort Massey	susanandjohnwalter@gmail.com

What Is Our Purpose?

Our purpose is to develop an amalgamation charter for consideration by our congregations—Fort Massey, Saint Andrew's, and Saint Matthew's—with the goal of uniting to form one church. This charter will outline how we might come together as one faith community to better serve our mission and vision.

What Is in the Scope of Our Work?

We are tasked with:

- Defining what amalgamation could look like, including key issues such as Worship, Social Justice, Finances, and Property.
- Consulting with congregations and clergy to gather insights and ensure all voices are heard.
- Developing a clear, consensus-based proposal that reflects the values and priorities of our congregations.

Our Vision for the Process

The aim of this initiative is to explore the possibility of creating a single, unified, vibrant, and relevant church presence in downtown Halifax that can effectively serve the community in the 21st century. This process will prioritize collaboration, transparency, and a deep understanding of the unique contexts, aspirations, and concerns of each congregation.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Engagement

This process will actively involve input from all congregations. Through regular consultations and updates, we are committed to ensuring that every member can contribute their thoughts, concerns, and hopes for the future. Your voices are central to shaping the path forward.

What Can You Expect from Us?

As part of our commitment to open communication, you can expect:

- **Updates:** Updates will be posted on the St. Andrew's website and linked to other church websites. These updates will summarize the topics discussed in meetings and outline next steps.
- **Opportunities for Questions and Feedback:** We welcome your questions and input! Please reach out to any of the Task Group Members listed above.

Highlights from Our First Meeting

During our January 24 meeting, we:

- Reviewed and adjusted our terms of reference to clarify the scope of our work.
- Defined our work phases: Foundation Setting (Jan-Feb), Exploring Possibilities (Mar-Apr), and Charter Finalization (May-Jul).
- Agreed to form working groups to address specific areas, such as worship, social justice, and governance. **Working groups will utilize the expertise of content experts within each congregation. Volunteers will be needed!!**

Phased Timeline and Next Steps

To ensure a balance between efficient decision-making and inclusive engagement, we have adopted a phased approach:

- **January-February 2025:** Foundation setting, including a visioning session with clergy, board chairs, and key stakeholders, and task group onboarding.

- **March-May 2025:** Consultations on key foundational issues such as worship, social justice, programming, and governance.
- **May-July 2025:** Charter drafting and preparation for congregational meetings in September.

Visioning Session

On February 12, 2025, task group members came together with Clergy and Board Chairs from each church for a visioning session as part of the amalgamation charter process. This session was a significant step in imagining the future of our united church and exploring how we can best serve our faith and community.

Key Takeaways from the Visioning Session

The session focused on identifying our shared challenges, celebrating our strengths, and envisioning the possibilities for a vibrant, unified church. Some highlights include:

Recognizing Challenges as Opportunities: While we face financial strain, declining resources, and societal changes, these challenges are also opportunities to innovate and align our collective strengths.

Celebrating Strengths: We are united by our welcoming and inclusive communities, our rich musical traditions, our commitment to outreach, and the strong sense of belonging we foster, all rooted in the teachings of Christ.

Envisioning the Future: Participants imagined a church that is vibrant, accessible, inclusive, and deeply connected to the needs of the wider community.

What's Next?

The results of the visioning session will now go to the Amalgamation Task Group. They will use this input to guide their work in shaping the charter for our potential unified church. Once the Task Group has refined these ideas, they will bring them back to all congregations for your input and feedback in the near future.

Fort Massey Information Session

On **February 25, 2025**, Fort Massey hosted an **information session** to engage their congregation in the amalgamation process. The session was facilitated by **Rev. Jeff Chant** of Fort Massey, and **Betsy Hogan** from St. Matthew's presented on the process her congregation followed to arrive at their decision to participate in this exploration.

Following the presentation, Jeff, Betsy, and **Craig Kennedy**, the facilitator, answered questions from attendees. This open and transparent discussion provided an opportunity for Fort Massey members to ask questions, raise concerns, and share their thoughts about the process.

We are grateful to everyone who participated in this session. Open conversations like these are essential to ensuring that all voices are heard and that we approach this process with clarity and shared understanding.

Task Group Meeting #2

The task group met for a second time on February 26th to begin planning how consultations will proceed. Further updates will follow soon.

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