

Recommendations of the United Visioning Group  
To be presented at Meeting of May 14

According to the results of the city wide United church congregational vote in September 2007 and our mandate (to combine 6 congregations into 3 buildings), the UVG has prepared a recommendation. The recommendation is based on general rationale which apply to all partnerships and specific rationale which apply for each individual partnership.

The first goal of the recommendation is to reduce overall building operating costs as outlined in the Tossell report. This is achieved by existing congregations coming together in buildings resulting in cost sharing. In addition to utilities, this will also result in an overall decrease in other facility costs, for example snow removal, grounds care, custodial services, security and ongoing maintenance which will also be shared at the selected building. These steps will immediately allow congregations to realize an improvement to financial situations, and as a result and most importantly provide an opportunity to expand their United church ministry and mission in new ways, perhaps through shared activities, while continuing their current programs. We feel that the recommendation will also position congregations for future joint work, for example through shared programs, shared ministry leadership and other church staff, all dependent on individual congregation's wishes to move in any particular direction.

We have arrived at our recommendation after lengthy discussion and deliberation and believe that they represent our best recommendation to fulfill our mandate. This is a UV

GROUP recommendation, fully supported by all members of this group, representatives from all 7 United church congregations.

The UVG is recommending the following:

- 1) As per the consultants report – Willowgrove United to stay open and East Korah Maxwell building to close but congregation to share facilities with Willowgrove

*1b) Willowgrove is the only building , identified in the consultant's report, that:*

- *requires no upgrades to plant or facility*
- *is operating at a comfortable occupancy*
- *would be able to accommodate the congregation of East Korah Maxwell in what ever format East Korah Maxwell determines*

*The group recognizes that the financial considerations of East Korah Maxwell make closing of the building a practical recommendation.*

- 2) That one of the two downtown church buildings (St Andrews or Central) remains open and facilities shared by both congregations. It will be left to the two congregations to determine which building best meets the present and future needs of the congregations.

*2b) The group recognizes the need for a downtown presence.*

*These congregations have a long history of sharing services and have a common worship style.*

3) Emmanuel United and John Wesley United to share facilities. It will be up to the two congregations to determine which building best meets the present and future needs of the congregations.

*3b) The group recognizes that both Emmanuel United and John Wesley United share a similar worship style.*

*These congregations have engaged in preliminary partnership activities and have discovered similar core values and vision.*

Next steps:

The UVG is requesting church councils/boards to arrange for congregational meetings in June to vote to endorse, in principle, the congregational partnerships proposed in the UVG recommendation. It is hoped that meetings can be held the same day for partnered congregations.

Between now and the congregational meeting UVG representatives, and when requested other UVG members will provide church councils/boards and congregations information/clarification on the recommendation.

Assuming approval in June, the UVG is requesting church councils/boards to initiate immediate discussions, although it is assumed that these discussions may not begin in earnest until fall 2008, with partnered congregations, through councils/boards or other designated groups. The goal is to achieve a partnership model, in the case of East Korah Maxwell and Willowgrove, and to achieve a partnership model and a decision on the building to serve the congregations in the case of St. Andrews and Central, Emmanuel and John Wesley. These final proposals will be brought to a vote of congregations at their 2009 annual meetings.

The UVG recommends the following discussions items for partnership meetings:

- Current and future plans for congregational ministry and mission
- Accessibility of buildings for all
- Assessment of buildings in light of the ministry and mission, upgrades necessary to accomplish ministry and mission goals, costs associated with potential options
- Sales possibility of buildings
- Ability to transfer and unite memorials into chosen buildings
- Renaming of church buildings, not congregations, to reflect shared ministry within
- Specific plans to enable chosen buildings to become the new home for all rather than existing congregation welcoming new congregation as a guest