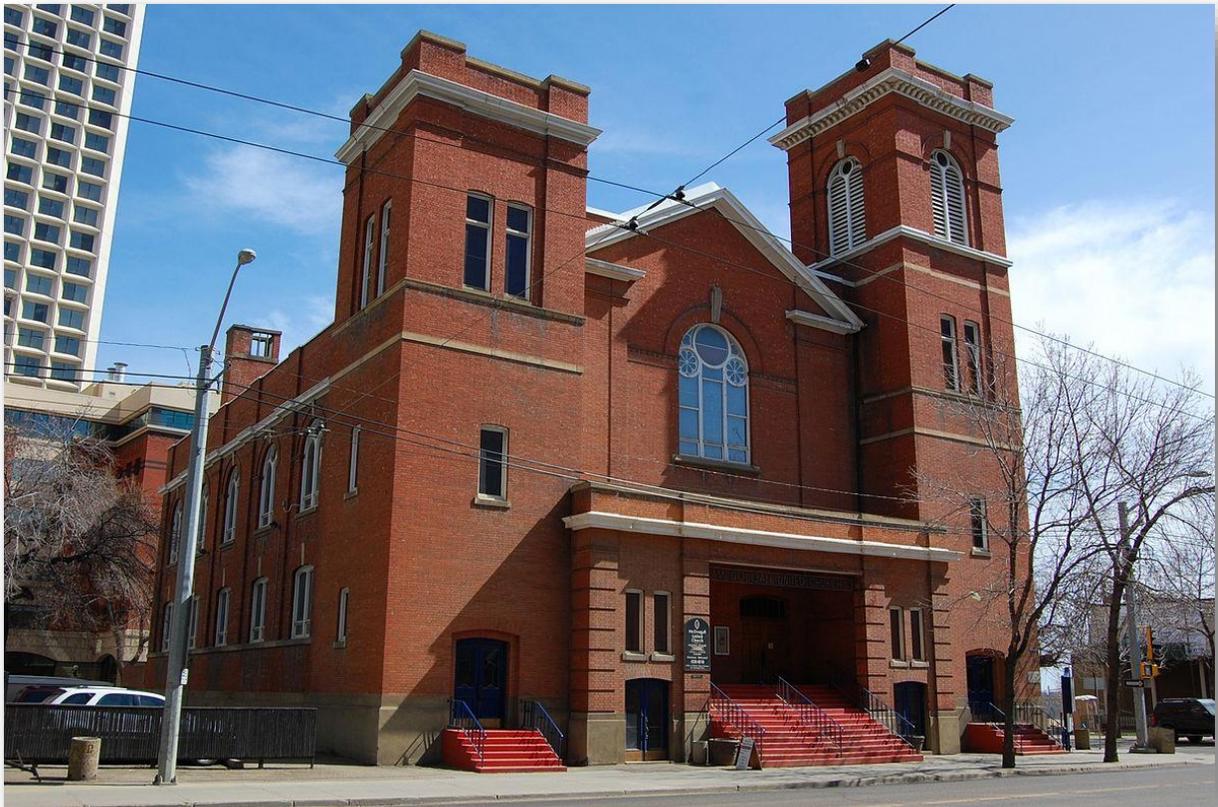


# Visioning the future of McDougall United Church

Report on the September 2019 Sessions with Congregation Members



**Facilitators:**

**MaryAnn Pastuck, Interim Minister  
Mark Holmgren, Edmonton CDC**

**Report Writer: Mark Holmgren**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
90-Day Plan	3
Introduction	5
The Case for Change	6
Report on Friday, September 13, 2019 Session: Values, Challenges, and Assets/Resources	7
Report on Saturday, September 14th Sessions: Identifying go-forward options	9
Major Actions Required: Congregational Growth, Long-term development of facility, and Short-term operations.	12
Convergence of Thinking and Major Actions	14
Three Elements of a Successful Development	16
The Development Process	18
Leadership Roles and Desired Attributes	19
Appendices	20

## Executive Summary

On September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, approximately 35 McDougall United Church members met to begin the process of identifying a future vision for the Church. They worked together to identify values, challenges, and assets and resources; discuss options about whether to sell or retain ownership of the church and its property; identify major actions to address in order to move forward on options; and identify the roles and skills/gifts that will be required of church leadership.

Participants generally rejected the notion of selling the church and disbanding the congregation or locating it elsewhere. The two options which occupied their time at the sessions were either to sell the church/property and negotiate a place for the congregation in the new development or retain ownership and develop the congregation and facility on its own. **More engagement and work are required to decide on which of these options is most feasible and desirable.**

As you will see in this report, there is a wide range of actions required. At the consultant's suggestion, a 90-day plan was developed that would allow the congregation manageable work to get started, regardless of which option is chosen down the road.

### 90 Day Plan

This plan begins October 1, 2019 and extends through to mid January 2020. No specific deadlines were set for these items within the 90-day period.

Item	Consultant's comments
Set time table for visioning and key strategy development and develop an engagement plan of the congregation and key stakeholders.	This time table can be high level and should extend beyond the 90-day period.
Share this report with the congregation and hold an open meeting so that members can receive and talk about a presentation from the consultant.	
Identify the priority skills and gifts desired of the ministerial team and other staffing and make decisions about who these leaders will be.	
Seek to understand who our allies, friends and potential partners are.	Understand what you need from others in order to recruit accordingly.
Develop a plan for healing the internal strife present currently.	This should be assigned to the ministerial leadership.
Understand our reserves, what funds are restricted and unrestricted and their respective balances.	Your accountant/auditor should be able to help you with these two items.
Undertake financial forecasting based on revenue and expense trends for the past three years.	
Understand the facility's historical designation and its restrictions on development.	Double-check your understanding with appropriate city personnel.
Development of congregation profile – community of faith	Include in the profile what skills, gifts, and networks people have to help with the development of the new vision.

Item	Consultant's comments
Develop and implement a communications strategy to ensure the congregation and other stakeholders are optimally informed about what is going on with the revisioning of the church.	Suggest working with a communications professional to identify the program and the most efficient way to do this.
Create the next 90-day plan.	

You will want to identify your needs for outside assistance, which will cost money. As best as you can, work to spend the least amount of money at the beginning and structure your overall time line with milestones that allow you to understand if you can proceed or adapt current plans or abandon them altogether and identify new options.

The section of this report entitled, *The Development Process*, was created with go-no-go milestones in mind.



## Introduction

On September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, approximately 35 McDougall United Church members of the congregation met to begin the process of identifying a future vision for the Church. The sessions were designed and facilitated by Interim-Minster MaryAnn Pastuck and Mark Holmgren (Edmonton CDC). The work undertaken by the participants included the following:

1. Identifying values to guide the future development of McDougall United Church.
2. Identifying the challenges facing the Church currently.
3. Identifying the assets and resources that exist currently throughout the Church and its people.
4. Identifying key go-forward options, including selling the Church facility and negotiating with the buyer the ability to continue worshipping at the facility and renovating/revitalizing the Church with an expanded purpose that would also continue to be the congregation's home.
5. Identifying major actions to be undertaken in interconnected scenarios:
  - a. The growth and development of the congregation.
  - b. The long-term development of the facility.
  - c. The short-term operational actions required.
6. Identifying the leadership roles and attributes (gifts, talents, skills) required to address the roles identified.
7. Identifying a 90-day plan of actions required to move forward on the major actions.

## Consultant's Note

In most of the exercises, participants were asked to provide their top three/highest priority responses to the question they were being asked to address. For the purposes of the short time we had together, we wanted to understand the priorities of the people there, not discuss every statement or idea or option everyone had; we did not have sufficient time to discuss everything. Groups kept notes of their conversations so that we could also share them in the appendices of the report.

It is a challenge for those who did not attend the September sessions to fully understand what took place by only reading post-it note and flip chart summaries. In my reporting of what was said by group participants, I have done my best to be true to what people wrote down and shared with their friends and colleagues, but I have also tried to weave in, as appropriate, key points that were made throughout the days that were not captured on flip charts.

There are two aspects to my role. First, I was a co-facilitator and in writing this report I have promised to include all comments captured. My second role is that of consultant who has worked for many years providing services to non profit groups, including the faith community, in visioning, strategy-making, innovation and making changes required to move forward into the future. As a consultant I have at times in this report offered my perspective (as you will see on the next page) and put forward a few suggestions for your consideration.

## The Case for Change

There are generally three types or categories of change:

**Incremental Change:** small tweaks and fixes that improve performance – often called Kaizen.

**Reformist Change:** significant adaptations to how things currently work in order to improve operations, create more impact, increase efficiencies and so forth.

**Transformational Change:** often refers to creating something new, radically shifting direction, crafting new ways of being and acting that were not occurring before or at least were not occurring to the degree they should.

Which type of change a group undertakes is connected to how they see and experience their current reality. If things are going fairly well but the group wants to improve, incremental change often is sufficient.

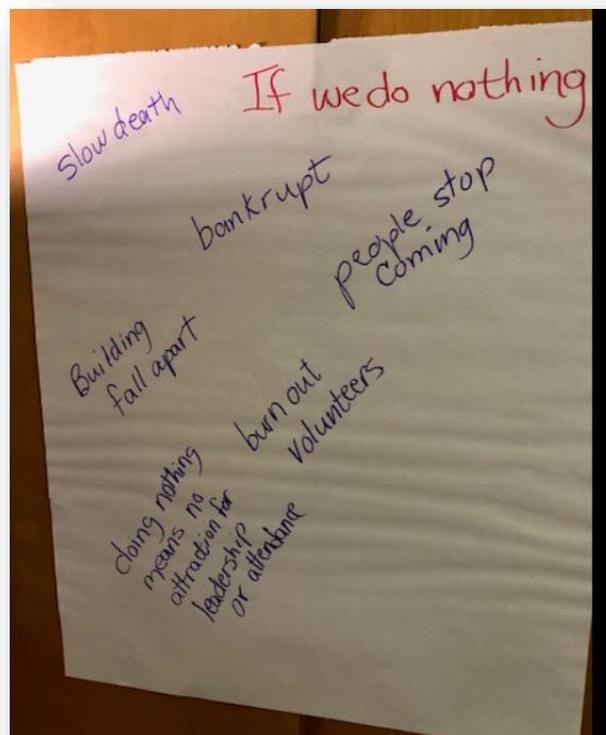
If much of what is happening now is acceptable but there are significant things that are not working and require address, reformist change makes sense.

If one's current reality is such that the future of the group's very survival is threatened if the status quo is maintained, the case for transformational change emerges.

My sense of the conversations at the sessions held on September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> is the case for transformative change is evident. The flip chart above reflects what session participants think will happen if "we do nothing" and continue to operate as we are currently.

Transformation change is BIG change that touches all aspects of an organization in the following ways:

- How it is governed
- How it is led
- How it partners
- How it grows
- How it changes the way people think
- How it gives up what is not working
- How it creates new opportunities for success.



There was agreement that if the congregation does nothing and maintains the status quo McDougall United Church will experience a slow death, go bankrupt, burn out volunteers, lose members, be unable to attract quality leadership and the facility will fall apart.

## Report on Friday, September 13, 2019 Session

### 1. Identifying values to guide the future development of McDougall United Church

Participants worked in small groups to discuss values and then indicate their top three value statements, which were shared with the rest of the group.

All notes taken by participant groups are also included in the appendices for reference.

The value statements were collected on post-it notes from all groups and then organized by theme as follows:

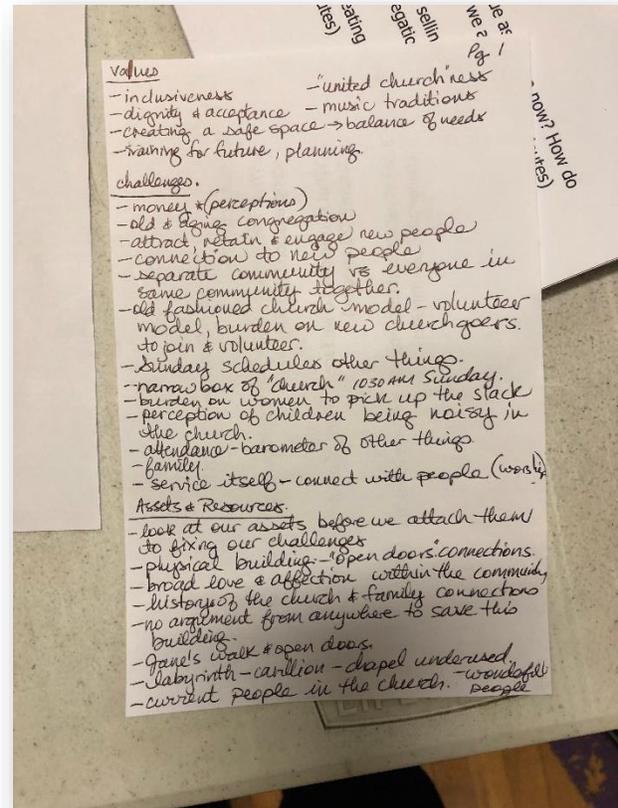


TABLE 1: VALUE STATEMENTS

<b>Community</b>	Includes being a kind community that welcomes families, young people, and others from all walks of life. Participants want a congregational community that actively cares for one another.
<b>Relevance</b>	Participants identified that "relevance" is vital to becoming the community they envision. They envisioned becoming a congregation whose worship was based on progressive, informed theology and that allowed all to search for their spirituality as individuals., while growing one another's faith together.
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	Participants identified the importance of being <i>deliberately inclusive</i> (seeking others not just waiting for others to show up), being <i>openminded</i> and "un-dogmatic" in order to offer a welcoming, accepting, compassionate, safe, and trusting environment.
<b>Accountability</b>	This particular value was labelled as 'TRUTH' but the narrative that accompanied it was connected to being honest, realistic, accountable, and fiscally responsible. The consultant is suggesting the value be named "accountability."
<b>United Churchedness</b>	This term was identified by one group under the Relevance theme. Based on discussion, it seems this term relates to what make the United Church generally and the McDougall United Church specifically unique and attractive to other

TABLE 1: VALUE STATEMENTS

	persons of faith, including the emphasis on social justice, but also this term connects to all the previously identified values.
--	--

## 2. Identifying the challenges facing the Church currently

Participants worked in small groups to discuss challenges and then indicate their top three challenge-statements, which were shared with all other participants. All notes taken by participant groups are also included in the appendices for reference. Three themes were identified:

TABLE 2: CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH

<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging of the congregation and the continued decline in the number of church members</li> <li>• Because of the above, a declining volunteer base.</li> <li>• Declining revenues that do not cover increasing expenses</li> <li>• The physical condition of the building which requires significant, costly upgrades.</li> </ul>
<b>Relevance</b>	Participants identified the Church is not as relevant as it needs to be to others in the general population of Christians, the implication being McDougall United Church needed to become more appealing and relevant to more people, in particular younger people, in order to grow, become sustainable and have a more active congregation.
<b>Leadership</b>	Uncertainty about the future of leadership in the church is a cause of worry and some tension within the congregation. Some participants noted there is "internal strife" where leadership is needed to help heal and move forward. Questions or challenges also exist about the skills and gifts required by leadership in order to address challenges as well as move forward with a new vision for the congregation and the facility.

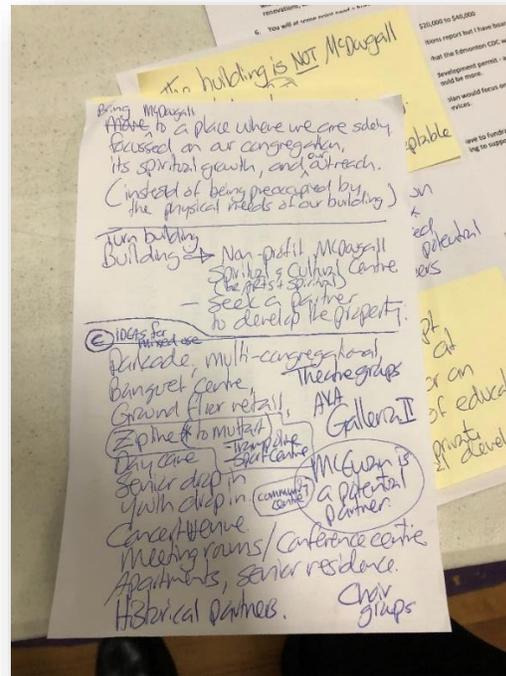
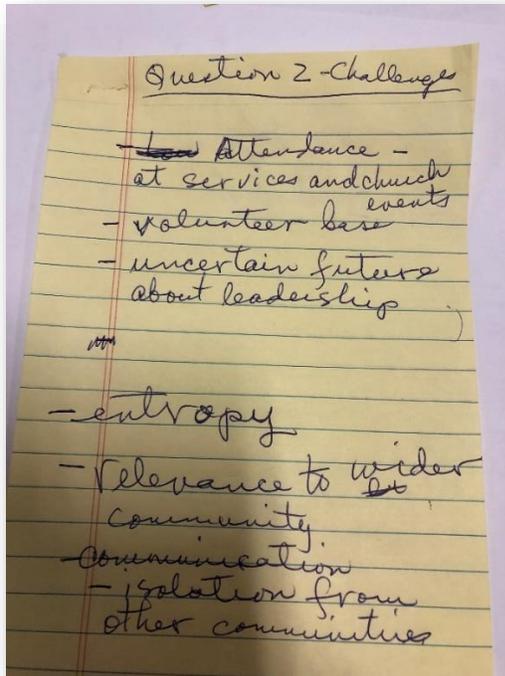
## 3. Identifying the assets and resources that exist currently throughout the Church and its people.

TABLE 3: CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH

<b>The Building</b>	McDougall United Church's facility is a landmark with historical designation. The sanctuary is beautiful, offers stellar acoustics for musical and theatrical performances, has a large seating capacity. Its potential is significant in terms of becoming a centre for the arts and culture and there are potential community partners who will help us.
<b>Finances</b>	The Church has significant financial reserves, parking lot revenues, and the potential to generate income from performances and event rentals. The reserves are current assets that will dissipate over time if the Church continues to operate as it is now.
<b>Brand</b>	McDougall has a Congregational Brand and a General Public Brand, which do overlap. The former relates to the reputation of the Church as a place where

TABLE 3: CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH

	progressive theology, social justice, and inclusiveness are alive. Its public brand is connected to the performances and events hosted at the Church and its historical significance and aesthetics.
People	Within the current congregation there are people with skills, history, networks, and financial resources that, if mobilized and leveraged to address a clear vision have the potential to expand the numbers of people supporting the attainment of a new vision.



## Report on Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> Sessions

**4. Identifying key go-forward options, including selling the Church facility and negotiating with the buyer the ability to continue worshipping at the facility and renovating/revitalizing the Church with an expanded purpose that would also continue to be the congregation's home**

Participants were asked to envision a future in two overarching ways and share their comments about the implications of each option.

### 1. Sell the Facility with three options:

- Sell it and the current members of the congregation would join other congregations.**
- Sell it and re-establish the McDougall United Church congregation elsewhere.**
- Sell it and negotiate with the purchaser the continued use of the facility by the congregation.**

**2. Retain ownership and renovate/revitalize the congregation and the facility, creating a path forward that grows and nurtures the congregation and that creates a new or expanded purpose of the facility, such as becoming a centre for the arts.**

The participants rejected Options 1 (a) and (b).

In the former case, they were not supportive of effectively ending the life of the McDougall United Church congregation and in the latter case, they believed that relocating the congregation elsewhere would result in losing too many members for the congregation to survive.

While people agreed that the Congregation and the Facility are not necessarily one in the same, there appeared to be consensus that the future life of the congregation is connected to the future use of the facility.

This indicates that whether the facility is sold, or the congregation retains ownership, there was broad agreement that the redevelopment of the facility must allow for the congregation to live and grow within it.

Whether the facility is sold, or the congregation retains ownership, there was broad agreement that the redevelopment of the facility must allow for the congregation to live and grow within it.

## **SELL TO A DEVELOPER**

*What participants said about Selling the Facility/Property and negotiating with the purchaser the continued use of the facility of by the congregation (1, c).*

Participants acknowledged that this option would remove the financial burden and financial uncertainty the church is experiencing currently, while allowing the congregation a continued presence in the facility. As well, this option would mean the church would not have to raise significant dollars to renovate the facility. This option offers the potential of repurposing the facility to be of benefit to the community, as a performance centre, arts center, as well as be a place where expanded programming could take place.

A critical question raised was would this option sufficiently allow for the growth of the congregation or would the space allotted for worship and related activities limit growth potential? There appeared to be agreement that understanding the growth aspirations of the congregation had to occur before deciding to sell the property.

Interest was also expressed in being able to influence what kind of development would occur in order to keep such development connected to the mission and purpose of the church and its social justice priorities. For example, session participants seemed more likely to favor the development of seniors housing or affordable housing (at least a mix of it) than an office tower.

Some concerns were expressed about this option diluting the brand of the church, making it less recognizable as a leading congregation in the community. Also, of concern to some was losing the control of the property.

## RETAIN OWNERSHIP

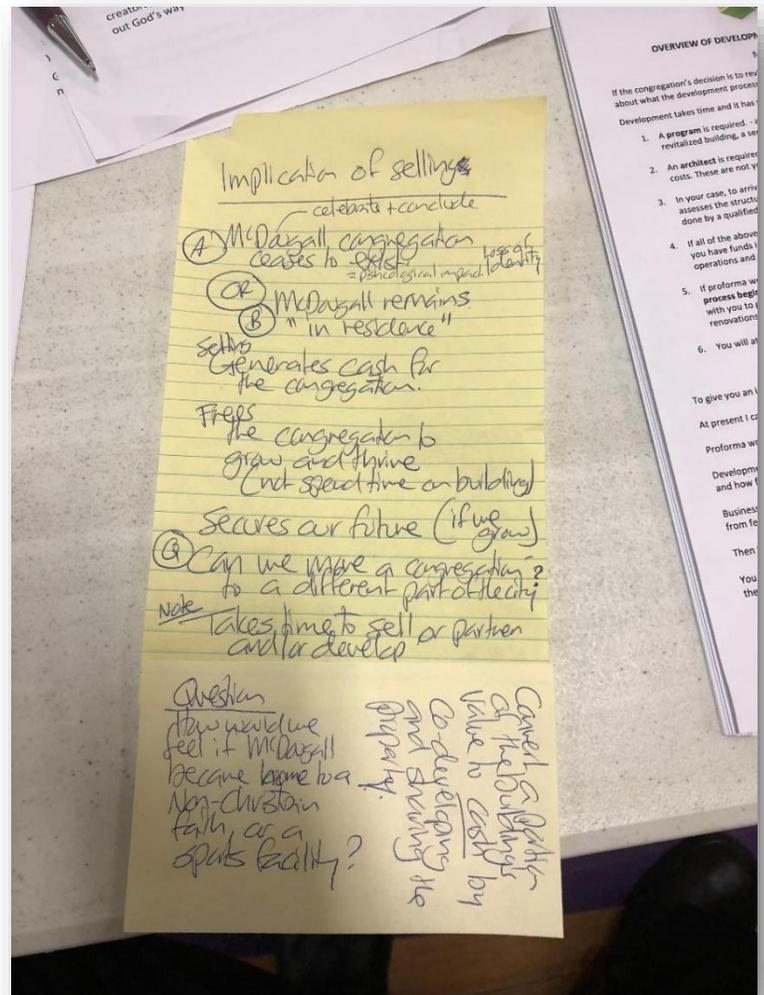
What participants had to say about retaining ownership and renovating/revitalizing the congregation and the facility, creating a path forward that grows and nurtures the congregation and that creates a new or expanded purpose of the facility, such as becoming a centre for the arts.

This option allows the church to retain control of its entire future, and allows more lee-way to introduce new programming and services to the community (multi-congregational, banquet centre, ground floor retail, zipline to Muttart, trampoline, sports camp, daycare, senior drop-in, youth drop-in, concert venue, meeting rooms, conference centre, apartments, senior residence, historical partners, choir groups, etc.)

While some of these ideas (and more - see appendices) might be feasible in the previous option, the developer would have final say on programming.

This option would not limit the growth of the congregation, at least not as much as the previous option. As the congregation grows, more revenue would come in and the church would have the ability to decide how to manage both the public use and the congregational use of the sanctuary and other amenities in the building.

This is the riskier option, calling for the church to raise significant monies to undertake the development itself.



### **5. Identifying major actions to be undertaken in interconnected scenarios:**

- a. The growth and development of the congregation**
- b. The long-term development of the facility**
- c. The short-term operational actions required**

Approximately half of participants worked together to explore the topic of growing and developing the congregation. The long-term and short-term development of the facility was equally divided by the other half.

#### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONGREGATION**

*What participants said about the major actions required for the growth and development of the congregation.*

Participants identified the need for McDougall United Church to attract young people and a more diverse population and acknowledged how worship is undertaken currently will need to change and adapt to a larger, more diverse congregation. Using technology to accommodate online opportunities to worship and engage in the church community was mentioned.

The importance of music was frequently mentioned and that it had to be relevant and inspiring to a broader audience. As well, the participants identified that to attract more people, there had to be more ways to gather and work together on social justice issues of interest to all members.

Though not mentioned specifically, the ideas and comments expressed imply that the current congregation must be prepared to change and adapt its current expectations and practices if it wishes to grow membership.

#### **LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT OF THE FACILITY**

*What participants said about the major actions required for long-term development of the facility.*

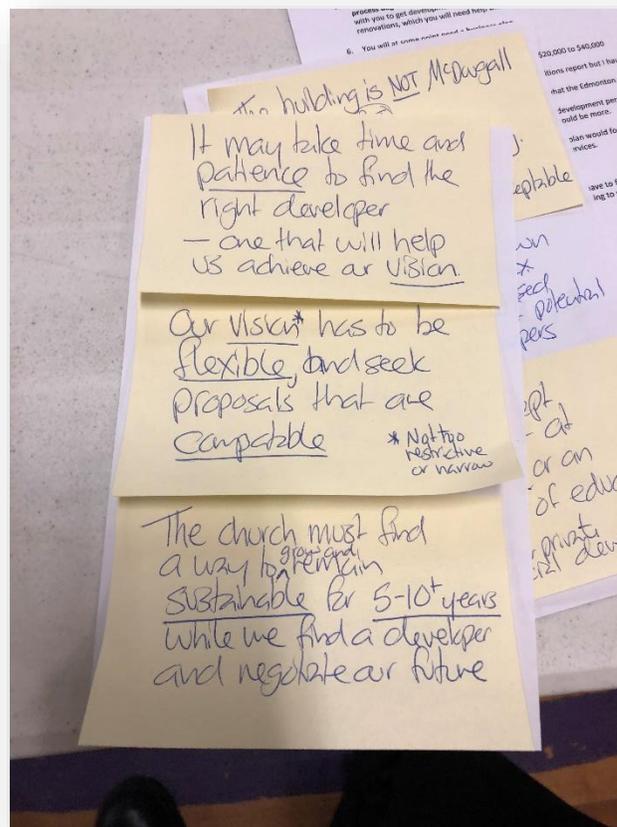
Deciding what the purpose of the facility would be and what it would offer the community are key first steps. This calls for expanded engagement of the congregation. Some options shared were:

- Expand the church as concert hall – get more performers in – expand the # of rentals.
- Bring in more speakers of interest to the public, including well known speakers.
- Open a day care center or a senior's center or a gathering place for newcomers.
- Open space for Pilates, yoga, meditation, organized relaxation programming.
- Become a centre for trade show, rummage sales, gallery shows, etc.
- Offer a recreational area where people come to work out or engage in fitness programs.

Participants identified the need for a flexible vision that could adapt as more information was uncovered.

Some key actions required to move forward were as follows:

- Understand our historical designation and the restrictions faced in terms of development.
- Hire people with expertise to help us (project manager, consultants) for specific technical elements of development.
- Understand what UCC restrictions or guidelines we have to abide by.
- Identify the capital and operating costs of the future vision.
- Understand how our vision and desired programming are impacted by building codes.
- Identify potential partners and operators.
- Understand our reserves, their purpose and how they are restricted or not restricted and then assess how applicable these reserves are for supporting the vision.



### SHORT TERM OPERATIONS OF THE CHURCH

*What participants said about the major actions required for the short-term operations of the facility/church (over the next 3 years or so).*

Participants identified the need to understand current finances and the trends that are occurring and when the church will run out of money without expanded revenues. Other actions identified include:

- Identifying facility upgrade priorities that require address in the short-term and spending money only on them.
- Hiring someone (on salary or on commission) to get more business (performers, speakers, etc.) in order to grow revenue.
- Better market the current congregation to attract new people to the church who want to worship with us but also want to be a part of our renewal.
- Seek grants for the short-term to help us.
- Identify partners and leaders who want to help us short and long term.
- Perform a skills inventory of the current congregation.

## Convergence of Thinking and Major Actions

While addressing these three streams of major actions in different groups allowed for more focused conversation on each of them, at some point – I suggest sooner than later – these three topics need to converge or weave together.

As mentioned earlier, the desired future of the congregation is tied to the future of the facility. The congregation's intentions plans and actions about its future have to inform the renovations of the facility but also *fit* the re-invention or re-shaping of the facility into a revenue producing entity. Converging the three streams of major actions required to go forward will be difficult at times, but necessary.



The future of the congregation is what people are most concerned about, most passionate about. It is about moving forward and growing as a faith community. People are much more connected to their faith, more familiar with congregational challenges, than they are with the facility itself.

The facility is a means to the end goals of the congregation, and I inferred from the conversations at the September sessions that some, if not most, of those present do not want to see the facility being the primary driver of the congregation's aspirations. As well, how to re-invent or reshape the facility is a complex undertaking that the majority of the congregation is far less familiar with than they are with identifying and congregational aspirations related to faith, worship, social justice, and so on.

There will be tensions between these three streams of actions because the congregation's future vision of being a faith community has to, as mentioned earlier, fit into the redesign of the facility. For example, if the decision is to transform the facility into an arts and culture centre where performances take place in the sanctuary and where other related programming can occur, where will the congregation worship? What space will be allocated for services and church programming and to what extent might that space accommodate the growth of the congregation?

This is one of the critical challenges facing McDougall United Church. Doing nothing – meaning just operating as you are now – will eventually end the Church. Selling the facility to a developer and

negotiating a place for the congregation could limit the size of the future congregation. To understand the challenge, here are a couple *what-if* scenarios.

## What-If Scenarios

### **Developer buys the facility and the land, including the parking lot**

Let's assume the developer builds hi-rise housing on the land and integrates the current church facility into the project. The church will either need to negotiate space in the current facility or in another location in the new development. It will likely have to pay rent for whatever space it uses, and a key question will be how much space does the church rent to accommodate its future plans while being affordable to the church?

The advantages of this option financially include receiving a large sum of money for the facility that in effect would sustain the congregation for years. The risk is that selling the facility and land will constrain the congregation's aspirations and reduce the church's control over its future.

### **McDougall United Church renovates the facility, retains the parking lot, operates the revenue producing program in the sanctuary.**

In this example, the congregation would likely be housed in the renovated basement or in the repurposed/rebuilt annex, which could limit the future growth of the congregation. That said, if the growth plans of the congregation are successful, there may be a point in the future where the revenues generated by much larger congregation become sufficient to sustain the congregation.

This could mean a return to the sanctuary for worship services while allowing for its use for performances and events on a lesser scale. The financial implications of this scenario are that the church will have to raise money to execute this option and earn revenues to pay its bills. This is a riskier option financially but perhaps a more palatable option in terms of congregational aspirations.

These are just examples. There may be others to consider, but the purpose of sharing the above examples is to demonstrate that options typically have different risk-reward profiles and involve different constraints.

### **Operating the facility as a business or social enterprise**

In all options, the church has to figure out how to earn more revenues. Current congregational size and parking lot revenues are not producing sufficient revenues to meet current expenses. In either of the scenarios above – and likely any others that are identified – the church will need to monetize the facility. This requires identifying the business you wish to operate, undertaking marketing and business plans, and ensuring the proforma provides a feasible approach to operating in the black. Such a business will require an operator, and I suggest it be someone or a group with a proven track record. Operating this business cannot be accomplished by volunteers to earn sufficient revenues to generate a profit. There is also feasibility work to undertake in order to discern if the business idea is viable and sustainable. This will require a market study and business plan earlier rather than later in the development process.

## Three Elements of a Successful Development

Based on the thought leadership of Antoine Palmer, who heads up Sparrow Capital, the three elements in the diagram to the right must be in place to have a successful development.

### Land and Building

McDougall United Church has prime property in the downtown area. It has historical designation, a rich history and has a public profile that is bigger than a conventional church. The historical designation means that if a developer buys the property it cannot knock down the church.

There is a yin and yang to this: on the one hand the facility will have to exist in the future (which is desirable to the church), but it may be harder to sell.

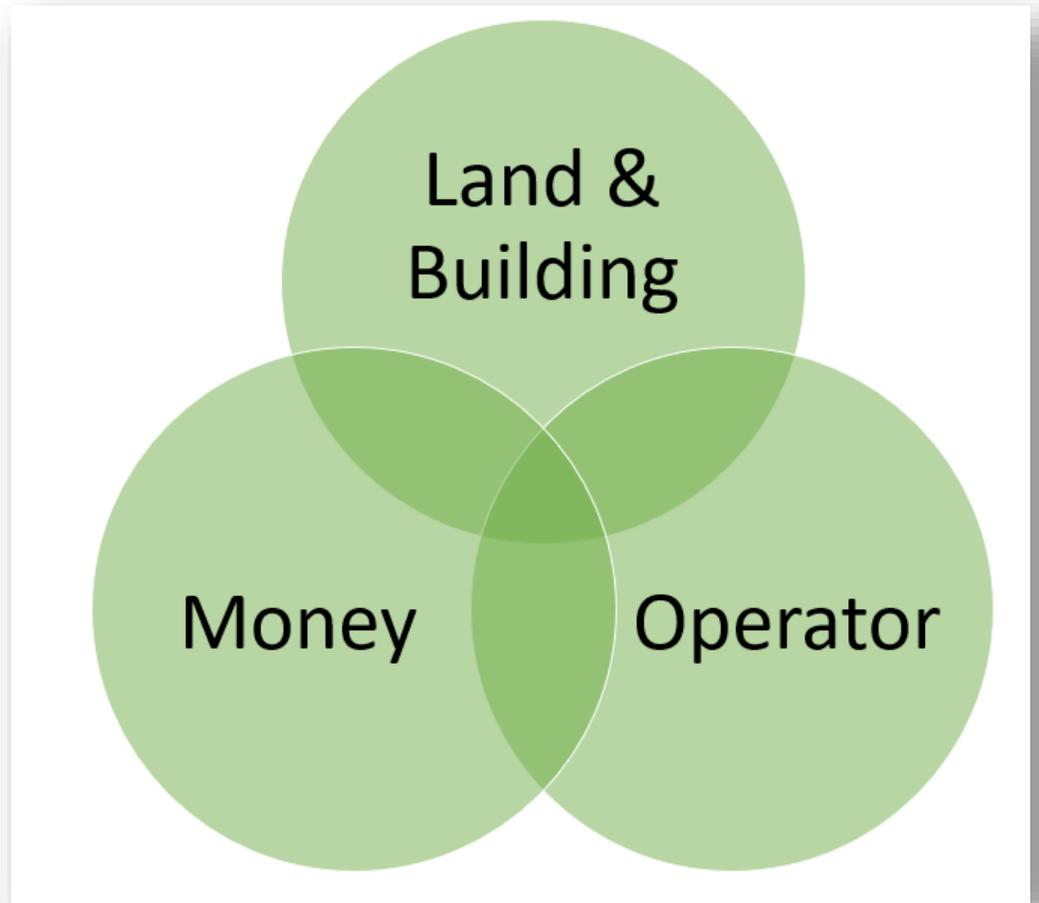
### Money

Currently the operations of the land and building do not produce sufficient revenue. The church is operating in the red and will continue to do so until it can either sell the building or earn the revenues required to sustain operations. Remember that each of these scenarios have different risk-reward realities.

If the church decides to retain ownership and renovate, it will have to raise the capital funds to do so. This is a more work-intensive option for the church and could take up to five years to accomplish.

Money is also a factor in terms of your go-forward business model. As mentioned on the previous page, the revenue producing business or social enterprise you decide to operate has to produce sufficient revenues to the church to operate in the black.

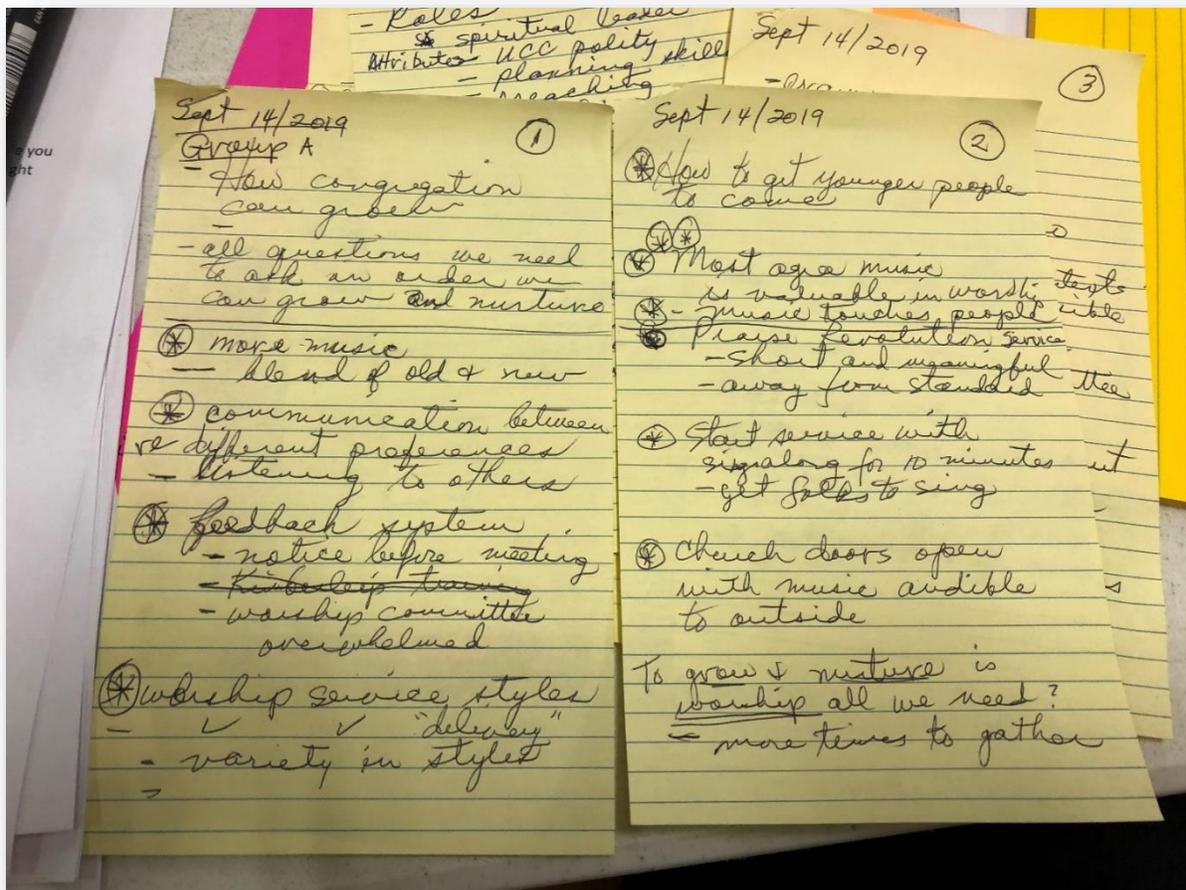
The key to success financially will involve choosing the best path forward that produces the money you require to achieve sustainability.



## Operator

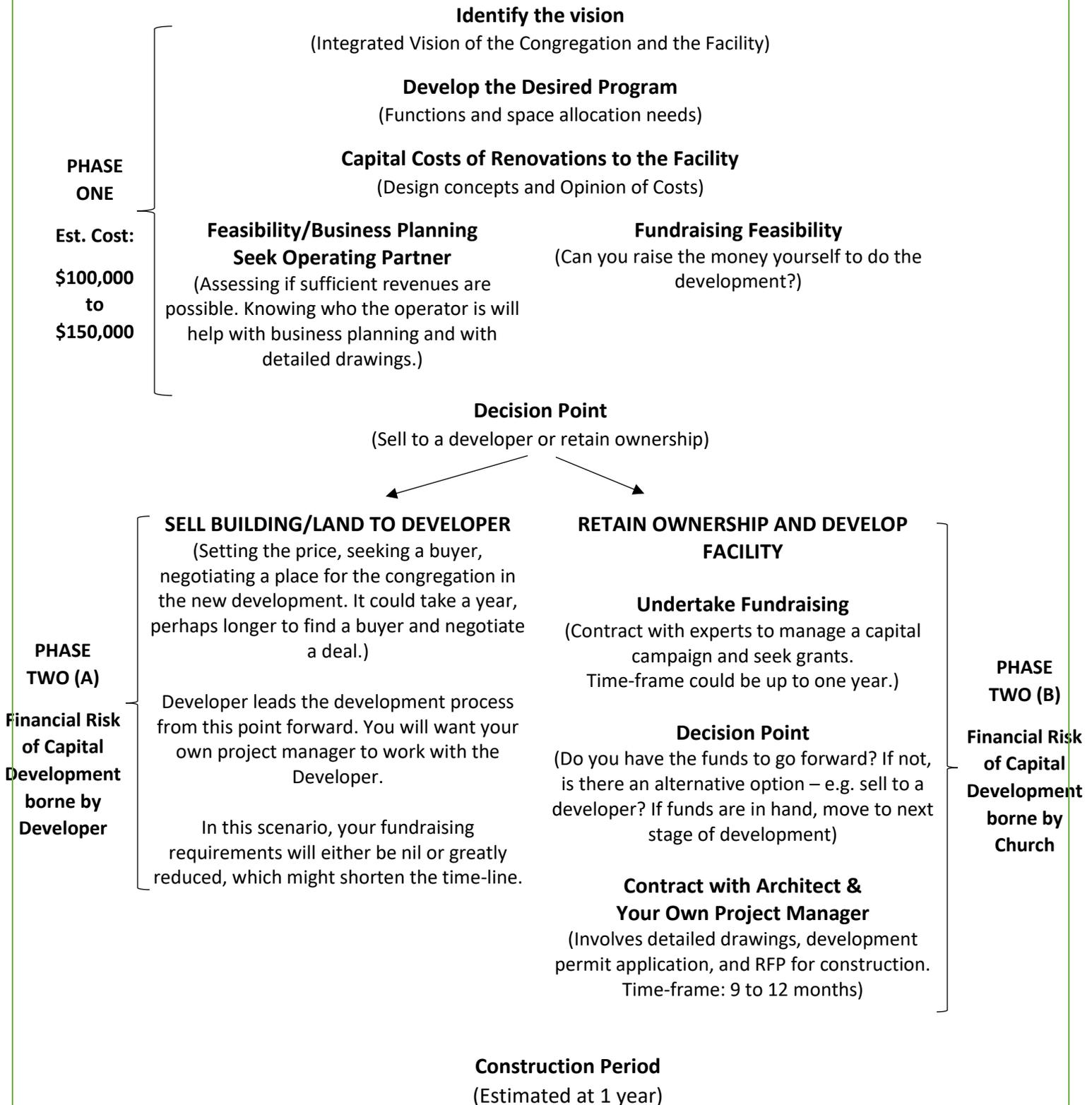
Having land and a building and sufficient money for capital development and operations are not a guarantee of success. The right operator is required to ensure that the business is managed, marketed, and grown into a profit-producing venture. In fact, Antione Palmer's perspective is that the lack of the right operator is often the biggest reason why projects fail.

All three of these elements must be addressed sufficiently for the reimagined McDougall United Church to emerge successfully from its current reality.



## The Development Process

At the September sessions, I spent some time talking with participants about the development process. In this section of the report I am expanding on that discussion to demonstrate that the development process will look different depending on whether you sell the facility to a developer or retain ownership and re-develop the facility yourself. The process will look something like this:



For Phase One it is recommended that the church contract with a project lead. Hiring an architect to help with the identification of program and identifying the design concepts and opinion of costs and hiring a consultant to assess fundraising feasibility are also recommended. The cost estimate provided is rough estimate based on 50% of costs for the project lead and 50% for consultants.

Retaining ownership (Phase Two B) will add time to the over all timeline because of the fundraising period.

In either of the Phase Two options, the time-line to get to a new building could be three to four years.

**A key question for the church is, *can it sustain operations during this period of time?***

## **6. Identifying the leadership roles and attributes (gifts, talents, skills) required to address the roles identified.**

There were many ideas and comments shared at the session on this topic (see appendices). Below are comments/ideas that generally represent all of the comments.

### THREE LEADERSHIP ROLES

- Strategy & governance
  - Inspire
  - Vision
  - Purpose
  - Leadership
  - Engage
  - Listen
  - Pragmatic
  - Skilled
  - Openminded
- Spiritual Role
  - Youth
  - Minister
  - Worship
  - Music
  - Congregational care
- Business Development
  - Engagement/outreach
  - Accounting and finance
  - Maintenance
  - Marketing and web, technology
  - Administration and membership
  - Facilities

## APPENDICES

### BIO: MARK HOLMGREN

Mark has played various roles over the years in the community services sector, either as a CEO, senior staff, or consultant. A deep passion of his is to end poverty and homelessness in Edmonton. Mark took the executive director's position at the Edmonton CDC after serving two years as a Senior Director at Tamarack Institute where he headed up Tamarack's Vibrant Communities division. Prior to working at Tamarack, he was identified by the Institute as a national thought leader.

Mark was the CEO of Bissell Centre for five years, leading the organization through a significant expansion of its work to house the homeless. He led the development of the Community Bridge, an innovative eviction program that was later identified as a key strategy in End Poverty Edmonton's strategic plan. During his time at Bissell, he was a member of the Mayor's Task Force to End Poverty and served as its co-chair of a working group on Housing and Transportation.

As a consultant he helped non-profits build a variety of social housing facilities, authored two social housing management models, and worked with non-profits, civic intuitions, and government agencies in the areas of organizational change and strategy. While the executive director of Operation Friendship he led the development of its current multi-purpose centre, which includes a 40-unit rooming house for hard to house seniors.

Years back he assisted McDougall United Church with the development of its Covenant and, working with architect Fraser Brinsmead, he undertook a study exploring the merger of the Church and St. Stephen's College to create a downtown campus, retail outlets, and a renovated facility. Mark also co-lead strategic planning, with Peter Faid, for the Presbytery.

Mark has spoken around the country and into the United States on such topics as Upside Down Thinking, Disruptive Innovation, Community Engagement, Collaborative Leadership, and Socio-Economic Trends. He is a voracious blogger and has authored numerous white papers on studies. His personal blog is at [markholmgren.com](http://markholmgren.com).

As well, he is a singer-songwriter, poet and fiction writer and digital artist who has performed at, or been published by, the Edmonton Folk Music Festival, North Country Fair, CBC Radio (nationally and provincially), Project Discovery, and the Rice Theatre Gallery. His poems, stories, and exposition have appeared in dozens of literary journals including *The Anglican Theological Review*, *NeWest*, *Matrix*, *Canadian Author & Bookman*, *Grain*, and many others.

For information about the Edmonton CDC: [www.edmontoncdc.org](http://www.edmontoncdc.org).

## MCDougall United Church – September 2019 Session Raw Notes

*Raw notes from the Friday evening session (9-13-2019) – Flipchart and post-it notes we were unable to read clearly could not be included.*

### What VALUES do we share that should guide our future as a congregation?

- Inclusiveness – open to everyone
- Positivity
- Bringing people together
- Not dogmatic
- Acceptance of individuality
- Bringing forward values from the past
- Transparency
- Open mindedness
- Be there for each other
- Build community – church family, Christian support
- Progressive and informed theology
- Strong leadership
- Radical inclusiveness
- Hold up each other sharing, praying
- Worship by song, story
- Honesty, integrity, transparency, kindness, openminded, non judgemental, diversity and inclusion
- Most important values: kindness open mindedness
- Kindness
- A church which values communication reconciliation and forgiveness
- Community churchedness
- Progressive informed theology in worship
- A church which values love kindness and grace
- Being a church family: community, caring for each other
- Community – family congregation
- Family future generations
- Not being dogmatic
- Searching our spirituality together and growing in faith
- Truth – honest realistic accountable fiscally responsible
- Inclusiveness open to everyone
- Open mindedness open to others
- Inclusive of youth + those who wish a more contemporary style of worship that is filled with the spirit
- A church which values the trinity + is inclusive of God, Jesus Christ as well as the holy spirit
- Inclusive of all age demographics, cultures identities and orientations
- Inclusiveness, accepting understanding safety compassion trust
- Deliberately inclusive and welcoming
- Family, Community, incl congregation
- Honesty/realistic, seeking truth, self and group
- Fiscal Accountability
- Operating within our means
- Safety and compassion, acceptance, understanding, trust
- Meaning and purpose (music)
- Relevance and substance??
- Growth – individual, spirit, organizational
- United churchedness
- Community
- Getting together
- Openness & honesty
- Diversity
- Music
- Respect for dignity
- Act of worshipping
- Looking out for each other
- Inclusiveness – open to everyone
- Positivity

- Community – McDougall is one – strengths and weakness are brought to the table. Acceptance of both strengths and weaknesses. Work in the community both in and outward growth. Recognizing the need to adapt

### **What CHALLENGES do we face in terms of operating in the future?**

- Shrinking aging congregation, entropy
- Building expenses
- Expenses vs declining revenue
- Relevance
- Sustainability
- Leadership
- Making tough decisions Conflicts
- Being relevant to the community
- Internal strife
- How to reach out to the community needs
- Developing modern up to date relevant theology
- Lack of volunteers
- The building needs to be repurposed, possibly centre for the performing arts
- The recent upgrades to the building have made it less of a concern
- We need to get congregants out in community to get a sense
- Expenses much higher than revenue, not enough giving
- Not enough people in leadership, volunteer involvement
- Aging congregation, not attracting youth
- Local involvement – outreach, accessibility, relevance
- Keeping God in the church
- Attendance of people and families
- Getting younger people (kids to attend)
- Societal change to independent units instead of working together to create society we want
- Also, people do not communicate with each other
- Attendance at services and church events
- Volunteer base
- Uncertain future about leadership
- Entropy
- Relevance to wider community
- Communication – isolation from other communities
- The building \$
- Shrinking and aging congregation
- Declining revenue and rising expenses, living beyond
- No youth
- Not enough volunteers
- The physical building – money pit
- Attendance
- Aging congregation
- Relevance vs entropy
  - To community
  - Attendance
  - Volunteer base
  - Financial challenges
- Building is almost unmaintainable
- Apathy
- Demographics of members
- Is church relevant in 2020
- More people through the door = more volunteers
- Congregational involvement – get more people active – leadership
- How to make the church more relevant and appealing? le: grow congregation
- Get out of rut, must believe change is possible, how do we ?????
- Need more teenagers, young adults, more familiar songs, division of musical tastes (old/vs. new)
- Daycare

## What ASSETS AND RESOURCES do we have to address these challenges?

- Leaders & followers
- Giving \$
- Hours & skills & talent
- Connections
- Parking Lot revenue
- Reserves
- Music (worship)
- The Building and Property
- Cultural space
- Historical status
- Potential partners (McEwan)
- Zipline potential
- Good acoustics for renters
- Central location
- Space for events
- Visibility and brand
- Recognition, goodwill
- Some money in the bank
- Not in debt
- Talented people
- Dedicated people
- Long term members

### People

- talented, dedicated, long association

### Congregation

- Leaders & followers
- Givers = \$ & hours, skills, talents
- Declining
- Connections

### BRAND

- Visibility, Brand, Recognition, Goodwill
- We are viewed as being inclusive, especially LGBT
- Community
- Inclusive Theology

*Raw notes from the Saturday session (9-14-2019) – Flipchart and post-it notes we were unable to read clearly could not be included.*

## What will happen if we just continue as we are now? How do we feel about just carrying on as we are now?

- Slow death
- Bankrupt
- People stop coming
- Building fall apart
- Burn out volunteers
- Doing nothing means no attraction for leadership or attendance

## What are your thoughts about selling the building and the implications on us as a congregation?

- Balance sheet would look like?
- Could we relieve ourselves of the capital costs?
- Can we retain parking lot and its revenue?
- Sale of bldg. – endowment of \$3/4M to replace parking lot – use to defray cong op costs
- Cash from bldg. could be used to attract a developer, bldg on parking lot, use revenue to renovate bldg..
- If it's sold and rented back who covers bldg. operating expenses?
- If bldg. was sold it could bring in more community programs, that could draw more people to the church
- Selling the bldg. doesn't necessarily mean that more people will come to the church, we need more contemporary upbeat services to draw people in

- McDougall congregation ceases to exist, celebrate and conclude
  - Can cause psychological impact, loss of identity
  - McDougal remains in residence
- Selling: Generates cash for the congregation, frees the congregation to grow and thrive
  - Not spending time on building
  - Secures our future (if we grow)
- Can we move a congregation to a different part of the city?
- Note: takes time to sell or partner and/or develop
- Question: how would we feel if McDougall became home to a non-Christian faith or sports facility?
- Convert a portion of the buildings value to cash by co-developing and sharing the property
- Repurposing rather than selling
- Displaced/dispersed community
- Would lose our “Brand”
- Would lose people who come because of building and connection to it
  - It is an anchor for people
- Need to revamp worship style (regardless) but especially if we were to move to a strip mall or something similar
- Would relieve financial burden in short term but we would still have to pay rent, be at whim of landlord
- Selling without changing will not solve problems long term; so if we change we should do it here
- Some of our problems are not solvable by selling
- Where would go as a community
- No one put up their hand to say let’s stay the same...a key point I believe to counter future inactivity
- Selling?

- Good finances \$5M but only if we could lease it back must maintain connection, remain in bldg.
- Would we have any control over who bought it? A public service group that allow us to stay (\$peanuts)
- Sell to another church denomination
- Not good implication for the congregation if can’t stay i.e.: condo redevelopment
- Not sure if congregation strong enough to survive without the building, split opinion, if move elsewhere some would not come as currently, they live close
- Location is key for this congregation, sell if we can stay (only)

#### What happens if we sell the church?

- If congregation continues
  - We could merge with another (i.e.: Rob Wesley)
  - We could build a new church somewhere else
- Merger needs negotiation i.e.: assets
- If we dissolve
  - Assets go to Northern Spirit Region
- Most important part of our convo to share
  - Do we stay or go – answer first
  - We need to find a partner or an owner to take over the bldg. ma
  - Safeway
  - Don’t do what 2<sup>nd</sup> ave united in s’toon did
    - Sale - \$ - develop facility – congregation w/\$big respo
  - Historical site concerns
- St Matthews, Winnipeg – affordable housing
- Affordable housing for arts users
- Larger spaces & building around us
- Attract deep pockets – institution
- Develop L shaped development – high priced housing

- Communities  
(4A) back of page
- Rentals
  - Better marketing/operation coordinator
  - Agency
  - Time to bite bullet and have facilities rental mgr.
  - New rental? – one night
  - Lots of work on this? Has been done

#### Summarize

Find the right development to provide revenue to operate and restore bldg. how can we be open to developers? Open to community uses? Can we as the congregation let go?

- Stay and essential to find a partner committee assurance of plan being lived out e.g.: church in Saskatoon
- Sell and bring in more community programs within the sell/ as part of the sell
- Selling has logical implications but also frees us to focus on spiritual development
- Relocating means not everyone will go
- Sell and build something smaller on the parking lot
- Sell it and celebrate our end; congregation dissipate
- Sell it and be a congregation in residence: developing the bldg. with purchaser
- Sell and move to another location
- Selling will really harm our branding, selling and moving not an option
- Selling the building, staying without the responsibility of maintenance, church is not the building
- Sell the building only on the condition we stay – lose our identity if we move elsewhere

### What are your ideas on creating a new future for our Church AND its Facility?

- Venue for the arts – music, performance, dance, artists
- Rentals for church increased – Kokopelli join to this church -> %of revenues etc.
- Increased rentals – open to how the building is arranged, i.e.: take out pews
- Focus on growing the congregation to bring in more money
- Pay for expense, hire property management firm to run the property
- Developer to build around us – parking lot and seniors center build around us
- Fundraisers – i.e.: bake sales to assist
- Divorce ourselves from building through a property mgmt. firm – we focus on the growth of congregation, they the property & tell us what \$ we need to fundraise to continue -> includes rental revenue (up) and other use development
- Focus on cohesion of congregation
- We need to be more inclusive of people who are looking for the benefits of a more modern service and worship music. Teleconference for the people that can't attend church on Sunday mornings. We need to boost our online presence.
- The church must find a way to grow and remain sustainable for the 5 – 10 years while we find a developer and negotiate our future
- Bring McDougall to a place where we are solely focussed on our congregation, its spiritual growth and our outreach (instead of being preoccupied by the physical needs of our building)
- Turn building – non profit McDougall spiritual and cultural centre, seek a partner to develop the property

- Ideas for mixed use: Parkade, multi-congregational, banquet centre, ground floor retail, zipline to Muttart, trampoline, sport camp, daycare, senior drop – in, youth drop – in, concert venue, meeting rooms, conference centre, apartments, senior residence, historical partners, choir groups.
- The building is not McDougall BUT McDougall needs to be resident in the building BUT the status quo is not acceptable
- Be prepared to tear down and develop the Annex
- Have the property assessed
- Make an inventory of potential partners and developers
- Sponsor a concept design contest at the Uof A or an expanded list of educational institutions and/or private commercial developers
- Music/arts centre, rent out smaller spaces for lessons, practices, other
- Tear down the annex and rebuild affordable housing, luxury condos, daycare
- Start with assumption we remain here as congregation find experienced consultants to help us identify our options
- Increasing rentals
- Cooperative developer who might do something around us
- Property management firm to help us, frees us to develop spirituality and grow congregation
- Spend the money to retain a property manager – the right person
- This is a 10-year project
- Long term strategy and what will we do in the meantime
- Do the research, marketing, viability
- Develop our way of worshipping – online as an example, do we want to stay as we are or – reinvent to grow this church before we move on
- Keep and grow our accountability to the community – downtown – social justice work
- Finding the right kind of development that is financial responsible and sustainable
- Can we let go for viable development?
- We can't know how to develop if we don't know what we will need as a congregation
- We need to look at what we do on Sundays at the same time as we consider how we can use the facility
  - Are people willing to not have choir space?
- Music centre, place for smaller music groups and musicians
  - Rent out rooms and spaces
  - Musician society
- We need to know how we will be before we can decide what we can give up?
- Tear down annex and rebuild as affordable housing and daycare mixed with luxury condos
  - Development partner?
- Feedback from worship committee and others
- Listening to others
- Younger folks needed
- Social Justice committee
- Passionate leaders needed
- How congregation can grow
- All questions we need to ask in order we can grow and nurture
- move music
  - Blend of old and new
- communication between different preferences
  - Listening to others
- feedback system
  - Notice before meeting
  - Worship committee overwhelmed
- worship service styles, delivery and style variety

NOTE: Participants chose to talk about major actions that had to be undertaken in three scenarios:

8. The growth and development of the congregation
9. The long-term development of the facility
10. The short-term operational actions required

### **Major Actions required for the growth and development of the congregation**

- More communication between groups
  - Top 10 favourites
- Music -v important to us
  - Speakers outside
  - Alternatives to how we do worship
- Social justice (relevance to society) how to organize
  - Who should do that?
- Rapid response group
- Visible Clergy
  - Need official presence
- Do we need to adhere to the standard worship model on Sundays?
  - Can we strip it down, be more dynamic, less formal – be more engaging for youth?
- How to get younger people to come
- Most agree music is valuable in worship
- Music touches people
- Praise revolution service
  - Short & meaningful
  - Away from standard
- Start service with singalong for 10 minutes, get folks singing
- Church doors open with music audible to outside
- To grow and nurture is worship all we need? More times to gather.
- Prayer group
- Pastoral care
- Community is also bringing in wider community in other contexts – be an official visible present
- Social justice committee
- Need an official way of getting word out about initiatives and be visible at public gatherings IE: rallies
- Music is really important
- Need to step up channels of communication
- Importance of attracting younger people
- How do we fit in wider community?
- Welcoming & inclusive
- How do we move members in community from passion to action/ to get involvement
- How does congregation inform communities and getting feedback both ways?
- Visibility & presentation – social justice issues
- Events by UC clergy
- Status e.g.: how does choice of music affect the growth of congregation
- communication among groups (ev)? Gap could be open to feedback – let people know they can give feedback
- worship committee – feed in – welcomes feedback
- different services and different styles of music? E.g.: 8:00am 9:30am
- sing familiar hymns before service
  - put speakers in doorway
- bring a family- aggressive welcomeness, affirming
  - more ways to gather
- music can be any kind but needs to be moving i.e.: touches the heart
- groups that serve the community as well as forming community e.g.: sandwich making
- different types of prayer offered
- support of pastoral care

- reach out to unrecognized people instead of meeting with old friends and going to usual pew/table
- leadership encouraging developing and supporting the spiritual wants/needs expressed above

### **Major Actions required for the long-term development of the facility.**

- Concert hall – get more performers in – expand the # of rentals
- Could also have speakers perform here instead of at hotels but they have high fees and we would have to charge a lot
- What about speakers
- Open a day care center, senior center
- Open space of Pilates, yoga, mediation, organized relaxation program
- Rummage sales – huge amount of work is a negative, everybody downsizing and social activity for newcomers are positives
- Recreational area
- Gathering info and vision
- Financial info re: reserves
- Consult with clients neighboring business etc.
- Understanding historical designation
- Upgrade needs and costs
- Determining acceptable development and usages of the bldg.
- Get property evaluated
- Concept of design- contest?
- Hire a project manager at some point
- Gather information and create a vision
- Study reserve fund flex
- Balanced budget?
- Determine 15 HO demand and RES fund
- Consult congregation – visioning
- Tenants and clients – choirs etc.
- Adjoining properties – hotels jasper, journal, high school
- UCC interests and restrictions

- Historical designation
- Known cost of upgrades to code
- Congregation must ultimately determine acceptable and preferred usage
- Evaluate the property \$
- List ext stakeholders and developers
- Design concept contest, universities, developers
- Hire a Project Manger!
- It may take time and patience to find the right developer, one that will help us achieve our vision
- Our vision has to be flexible and seek proposals that are comparable (vision not too restrictive or narrow)
- The church must find a way to grow and remain sustainable for the 5 – 10 years while we find a developer and negotiate our future (6C)
- Bring McDougall to a place where we are solely focussed on our congregation, its spiritual growth and our outreach (instead of being preoccupied by the physical needs of our building)
- Turn building – non profit McDougall spiritual and cultural centre, seek a partner to develop the property

### **Major Actions required for the short-term operations of the church**

- Decline in rental revenue – address
- Need more people in congregation – more volunteers, more in the plate, more commitment from existing group as well, more incentive
- John Pentland? Fishing tips book
- Paying for what you want
- Cannot run facility on volunteers
- Keep in touch with congregants to call on to help

- Communicate on issues progress etc. – open
- Have a building that is not being renovated
- Salary/commission person for rentals – not cost us money really
- Understand our expenses – to understand our fees for service
- Increase our rentals – to offset our programs that we need i.e.: pastoral care, Sunday school – paid people
- Clean up the church – junk, paint, repair
- Specific short-term task – volunteer coordinator role
- Tours of church
- Advertise programs
- Peer to peer fellowship
- Use facility wiser to fuller extent
- Short term bake sales, BBQ, fundraisers, carwash
- Plan events for holidays
- Professional travel association tours
- Large scale events/programs
- Use existing communications to answer questions
- Find out what other churches are doing & their successes
- Facilitate groups
- Determine skills of our congregants and if they could assist
- Everything is easy to explore in groups
- If you want to “help in this manner” join “this” group
- Priority list of to-dos
- Replacement of things – target for max impact
- Sponsorship expansion concept
- Set aside a percentage of \$ from rentals for maintenance
- Edmonton arts council – funding for arts
- Apply for these (grants for arts) but need to have revenues set aside for this – short term application process
- Apply for grants and funds that may be applicable
- Collective purchase power of several churches
- What do you like about McD? What do you want it to do? What skills do you have that you can offer?
- Inventory our stuff – what can we do with it?
- Improve what we have – internet, WIFI, computers
- The yard magazine 22, 500 residents in downtown core
- Short term targeted marketing campaign to bring in newcomers
- Expand property group – reduce impact on congregation and council
- Process of engaging the wider community needs to restart
- larger wider community – stakeholders contracting to Kokopelli etc. start the conversation again, can’t wait for long term plans to occur
- Critical mass of core leaders
- Understand expenses
- Use current facility wisely
- Critical mass campaign
- Apply grants/funds
- Clean up facility
- Map assets and people’s skills
- Improve communication home and wider

**What Roles do we need leadership to play and What skills, gifts, and attributes does our leadership require to move us forward?**

- kingpin – point person
- spiritual
- practical/incl financial, bldg.
- volunteer mgmt.
- lead the development process

- Set goals s/t & l/t & monitor progress i.e.: give step x step guidance
- Listens, and truly hears without judgment and gives guidance to possible solutions
- Delegation and mediation and facilitation
- Aware of everything going on and has good judgement as to when and how to react/respond
- Shoots from the hip – tells things completely & honestly without hiding behind confidentiality – leads from within the group/ not a dictator i.e.: has power to make decisions.... stays in close communication to ensure decisions are within congregational guidelines
- Older people's memories – they have to be ready to let those go
- Td bank closed – Lutheran church across street closed, bldg. sold and is now a senior's center with lots of activities, church went somewhere fresh and meet there.
- Developer might take over and develop the site allowing us to meet on Sunday
- What is the church without the building i.e.: could it be a mission with and for people: daycare, arts program, senior program, music program?
- Lose control
  - possibility of negotiating for Sundays and other uses or would we be locked out?
  - Would we have to pay a rent and once rent is set it could be changed (sky rocket)
- Would we still feel like a family with such a significant change in our life?
  - Ministers
    - Good preaching
    - Support staff
    - Connect to wider church
    - Worship leadership
    - Staff coordination
    - Communication skills
  - Music director
    - Choir
  - Pastoral care
    - Lay visitors
  - Board
    - Governance
    - Support staff
    - Office admin
    - HR
    - Finance
    - Communications
    - Renovations
    - Coordination (big picture)
  - Facility MGT
    - Mtc – major and day to day
    - Rentals
    - Security
    - Custodial
    - Renovations
    - Contractor
  - Project Manager for RE-Development
    - Technical knowledge
    - Planning skills
    - Communications
    - Industry contracts
  - Spiritual
    - Someone engaged in some justice issues
    - Willing to be vocal, present and visible
    - We are a downtown church and we need a minister who can be both an advocate and activist
    - This is also about living out the United Church Legacy of the social gospel
    - Someone who is relevant to modern times
    - Someone who can do LGBTQ outreach
  - Media relations
    - Someone high profile
    - Comfortable in the public space

- Does not avoid controversy if founded on Christian principles
- Marketer
  - Can and will reach out to wider business (ex: neighboring hotels) and social community
- Progressive, relevant theologian
- Caring non-judgemental pastoral caregiver
- A communicative council
- Must be visible (physically) in the church
- Strong organizational skills
  - Able to prioritize assess priorities

#### ROLES – LEADERSHIP

- Spiritual leader attributes
  - UCC policy
  - Planning skills
  - Preaching
  - Teaching
  - Integrity
  - Time management
  - People skills
  - Communication
  - Congregation care
  - Non judgemental
  - Receptive to feedback
  - Consultative
  - Collaborative
  - No hidden agenda

#### LEADERSHIP

- Prepared to play roles if it is ????
- Leadership??????
- draw young people to church
- needs to be able to fulfill multiple roles
- spiritual leadership required

#### LEADERSHIP

- God is central to their life bring people to the light, needs faith and belief in God (the trinity)

- Leaders need to be open minded and willing to listen
- Inclusive of everyone's voice
- Courage to bring up topics that need to be discussed
- Bring inspiration and positivity and hope
- Knowledge and competency and assertiveness, transparency
- To not be afraid to speak God or Jesus name
- Positive, hopeful, inspirational, inclusive, transparent/assertive, all voices heard, love, kindness, grace, communication, reconciliation, forgiveness

#### THREE LEADERSHIP ROLES

- Strategy & governance
  - Inspire
  - Vision
  - Purpose
  - Leadership
  - Engage
  - Listen
  - Pragmatic
  - Skilled
  - Openminded
- SPIRITUAL
  - Youth
  - Minister
  - Worship
  - Music
  - Congregational care
- BUSINESS DEV
  - Engagement/outreach
  - Accounting and finance
  - Maintenance
  - Marketing and web, IT and comps
  - Administration and membership
  - Facilities

## GIFT AND SKILLS

- Spiritual
  - Affordable, compassion, integrity, acceptable, present, strategic, open to feedback, encouraging, active listening, empowers other, receptive to the idea of others, values the skills and gifts of other, servant leader, works within scope of ?? , team player
- Business
  - Experience
  - Business acumen
  - Marketing
  - Financial acumen
  - Caring
  - Vision
    - Welcoming
    - Relationship orientated
    - Decisive
- Strat.
  - Decisive, visionary, big picture, networked
  
-