

**First Metropolitan United Church
Board Meeting Minutes of 19 October 2022**

1. Call to Order:

Edeana Malcolm called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm on 19 October 2022.

Present: Cheryl Black, Ross Breckon, Linden Holmen, Emily MacDonald, Shelagh MacKinnon, Marketa Mellows, Larry Scott.

2. Territorial Acknowledgement and Opening Prayer:

Emily MacDonald offered the territorial acknowledgement and the opening prayer.

3. Corresponding Member:

Motion: Larry Scott/Ross Breckon — “That Cheryl Black (Voluntary Associate Minister) be a corresponding member for this meeting, because of her involvement in the Future Search Group.” CARRIED.

4. Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Motion: Larry Scott/Ross Breckon — “That the Consent Agenda for the 19 October 2022 Board Meeting be agreed as circulated prior to the Board meeting, including the 21 September 2022 Board Meeting Draft Minutes, for adoption.” CARRIED.

5. Minister’s Report — Rev. Shelagh MacKinnon gave a verbal report.

6. Ministry and Personnel:

6.1. Ross Breckon reported that we now have someone to fill the position of Assistant Custodian. Cheryl has done the reference check. The applicant needs to give one month’s notice to one of his current clients, from the time he signs our offer. We will formally conclude the hiring shortly.

7. Treasurer’s Report — Ross Breckon

7.1. Finances:

First Met financial results to the end of August 2022 are tracking reasonably well to the 2022 budget except as noted below.

- a) The total revenue received for the first seven months of 2022 (not including Foundation contributions) is \$295,684 or 8% lower than the prorated 2022 budget to the end of July. This is primarily due to:
 - i. Givings (-8%) which, is likely a reflection of our Givings pattern which is usually more heavily weighted to the last half of the year.
 - ii. Letting income is now projected to be \$22,000 below the 2022 budget, consisting of a \$12,000 shortfall on room rentals plus a \$10,000 shortfall on parking revenue. The Office Administrator is putting a push on obtaining more parkers and room rentals, which may help reduce this portion of the deficit somewhat.
- b) Program Revenue is 20% below where it should be on a monthly prorated basic which may reflect the seasonal pattern of program activity. However, this percentage is distorted because there has been unbudgeted fund-raising (pass-through) activity which distorts the revenue numbers. For example, the Ukrainian Manse and Tammy Lindahl Recognition Fund. Total expenses for the first eight months of 2022 are \$620,001, which is on track with the prorated 2022 budget to the end of August (-1%). However, this represents a problem because those expenses with seasonal patterns which are weighted to the last half of the year will be incurred in the last four months of the year (September- December). These include Building and Grounds and Program expenses.
- c) Of particular concern are the Buildings and Grounds expenses. To the end of August 2022, the expenses are \$191,204 or 89% of the total 2022 budget. This is happening for the following reasons:

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- i. Fuel – oil & gas expenses are already at 113% of the annual budget (\$87,446.25) As the heating season begins this fall the budget overrun will increase. Exactly how much will depend how cold it gets in the fall and how soon the heating season starts. I am now estimating that this expense could be \$25,000 more this year.
- ii. Heating Plant Maintenance and general Repairs and Maintenance are at 96% and 92% respectively of the annual budgeted expenses. This reflects the seasonal pattern of the routine maintenance program (for scheduled maintenance) but leaves very little contingency available for unplanned maintenance work should the need arise in the final quarter of 2022.
- iii. Waste Removal and Recycling is at 97% of its annual budget amount. This appears in part to due to a budget estimating oversight where the ICA monthly contribution to these expenses was overlooked and First Met is now carrying the full burden of these costs. At our current rate of expenditure, we would see an annual budget overrun of \$6,000 in this budget element for 2022. Steps are underway now to mitigate this by decreasing the frequency of general garbage pickup. This could limit the annual budget overrun to \$4,500.
- iv. The Annual Budget overrun for Buildings and Grounds could be as much as \$30,000 (depends on return of cold weather).

Given the results in the First Met Financials to the end of August 2022, I am now estimating that the 2022 budget deficit originally estimated to be \$448,000 is likely to increase to between \$500,000 and \$600,000.

7.2 Administration & Letting:

- a) Victoria Symphony Society was alerted to the internal discussion at First Met about our future. VSS was disappointed to learn that First Met may be leaving our current location within the next 2 years as they were looking forward to building a longer-term relationship to use First Met Fellowship Hall as a rehearsal location. I reassured them that the bookings they have made for the 2022/2023 season will be honoured but I apprised them that a failure in our heating system over the winter months might present us with some challenges.
- b) I met with NAI Commercial Realty to brief them on the First Met Future Search process. We also reviewed the question of a lease term for the space in the lower level of the Heritage Building and Annex. Up to now we have been thinking of a minimum lease term of 5 years, but if First Met decides to amalgamate with another Church there may be issues with that term length if we decide to sell the property because of the amalgamation. They are prepared to help us work through those issues with prospective tenants.

7.3 Information Technology Matters:

- a) We continue to work on the issue of a poor wireless signal for our tenants on the second floor of the CEW. It is clear we will have to add additional equipment and cabling to deliver a good wireless signal and the Office Administrator is working with Total Solutions to cost out a flexible solution that would allow First Met to rent more of the second-floor offices on an individual office basis. There appears to be a market for this type of rental, which could generate \$3,600 per year per office plus additional potential parking rentals. We need an estimate from Total Solutions, before proceeding further.

7.4 Upcoming Fall Activities: Stewardship

- a) The First Met 2022 stewardship campaign will kick off on October 23. The Treasurer is planning a budget conversation with the congregation sometime in November. See 2023 Draft Budget Discussion Paper (pre-read to Board members).

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b) The draft budget for 2023 will be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

8. Strategic Planning:

- 8.1 Strategic Plan update — Edeana was away for the past month and has just returned.
- 8.2 The \$27,000 for refugee sponsorship has been transferred to ICA, as the agency administering the funding for the sponsorship. FMUC Foundation transferred that amount to FMUC. Edeana will discuss with David Bray (Communications) and Cheryl Black (Stewardship) how we might publicise the congregation's contribution to this work.

9. Property Management Task Group (PMTG) – Linden Holmen

This report provides an update on the effort to obtain a design and cost estimate for a **heating system** that will heat the Annex, CEW, SS and FH now heated by the oil-fired boilers with gas-fired boilers using the same heat distribution system.

The PMTG requested a proposal from Rocky Point Engineering Ltd. to prepare design and cost estimate for the above-noted system. Rocky Point submitted a proposal, but its scope was broader than requested. PMTG clarified its interest and requested a revised proposal to address them. This led to discussions about the approach, specifically, about alternate levels of design detail which would affect the accuracy of the cost estimate, and a design-build approach which means that PMTG would approach a contractor to submit a quote for the prescribed scope of work. This approach has two advantages: no upfront costs and a quote instead of an estimate. The PMTG decided on a design build approach.

PMTG discussed this approach with a recommended contractor. In the following discussions, the contractor declined to provide a quote and offered an estimate. He also required all asbestos to be removed in accordance with applicable regulations before carrying out any work. Another issue that has emerged is that this contractor has offered contradictory information about the need to remove one of the boilers. The PMTG hopes that the gas-fired boilers can be installed without the need for removing one of the boilers. This is significant because that factor affects the amount of asbestos that must be removed.

PMTG has discussed this issue with Pinchin, the consulting firm that has carried out three studies of hazardous materials in First Met buildings, and it is prepared to carry out the work. The outstanding issue in this regard is the amount of asbestos that must be removed which is determined by where the gas-fired boilers will be placed. These issues are still being explored.

10. Team Reports —

10.1.0 Larry Scott reported for the Future Search Group, with input from FSG members present.

10.1.1 Summary of Comments and Questions Received by Secretary of Board — 4 October
(See Appendix.)

10.1.2 Questionnaire Seeking Feedback on the Board's Recommendations on the Future of First Met.
(In pre-reads folder for Board.)

10.1.3 Proposed Agenda for 23 October 2022 Congregational Meeting will include these "whereas clauses" and the actual motion about amalgamation. (See 10.1.6).

10.1.4 The minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 14 October 2022 have been received. Among the comments about possible amalgamation, is a request that amalgamation be specified as amalgamation with a United Church congregation, given that amalgamation involves blended ownership of property, and the Manual outlines the legalities of such action only among United Church congregations. Shared ministries with another denomination exist, but the arrangement does not involve amalgamation.

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Motion: Breckon/Linden — “That the Board accept the request from the Board of Trustees that amalgamation be specified as amalgamation with a United Church congregation.” CARRIED.

10.1.5 Motion: Linden Holmen/Larry Scott -- "That having received the summary of responses from the congregational questionnaire which indicate a significant majority in support for the two recommendations of the Future Search Report, the Board continue to recommend that the Congregation pursue a course of amalgamation, and that only if all other options are rejected, the Congregation should pursue the creation of a Legacy Charity." CARRIED.

10.1.6 Motion: Larry Scott/Linden Holmen — “That the following ‘whereas clauses’, together with the indicated motion, be printed as part of the agenda for the Congregational Meeting called for 23 October 2022, for the purpose of having the congregation vote on the motion:

Whereas the Board has completed its due diligence through:

- in-depth analysis of 6 options for the future direction of the congregation (The Future Search Group Report)
- making this Report available in Executive Summary form through mail, pick-up and email distribution and the full report upon request to 300 + members and adherents
- presentation at a Congregational Meeting
- the offering of both on-line and in person small group discussions
- distributing a questionnaire electronically and made available on paper
- their own study and discernment

And whereas First Metropolitan has its own experience of the positive effects that can result from an amalgamation, the Board of First Metropolitan United Church recommends the following action:

Motion for Congregational Meeting — ‘That the Congregation of First Metropolitan United Church chooses the path of Amalgamation and instructs the Board to begin the process of finding a United Church congregation with whom to partner’. CARRIED.

10.1.7 It was also agreed by the Board that the following advisement be printed on the agenda and recorded in the Minutes for the Congregational Meeting of 23 October 2022:

“Next Steps, if the preceding motion is passed by the Congregational Meeting (included in Congregational Meeting minutes):

- 1. The Board will appoint an Amalgamation Working Group to lead the congregation in the process of amalgamation.**
- 2. The Board and/or the Amalgamation Working Group will consult with or report to the Congregation, once prior to Christmas and at least once every 2 months thereafter.”**

10.1.8 Following the Board meeting of 19 October 2022, a letter should be sent to those who have email, reminding the congregation of the Congregational Meeting on 23 October 2022, and including the motion and “whereas clauses” being presented at that meeting, as well as instructions for those who wish to participate in the congregational meeting on-line by Zoom. The text of letter is in Appendix 2.

10.2 Team Report/Board of Trustees — Larry Scott

The Board of Trustees met on 14 October 2022 and were supportive of the Board’s motion to the Congregation about amalgamation, with the qualifier noted in FSG report above. The Trustees received notice in June from Land Titles BC that title for First Met United Church rests with the Trustees again.

11. Volunteer Appreciation

11.1 Shelagh and Edeana noted the major significance of the Future Search Group’s work having progressed to this point, and expressed thanks on behalf of the Congregation for the many hours of

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volunteer work done, in order to bring this work to a Congregational Meeting. Formal thanks can be expressed at the Congregational Meeting where the Future Search Group gets disbanded.

11.2 Shelagh expressed desire for a future discussion on volunteer welcomers, who are present at the door during certain church office hours.

12. Old Business Reviewed

12.1 Workshop by AIDS Vancouver Island: this took place yesterday, for staff.

12.2 Edeana to reorganize Strategic Plan on Dropbox, to make it more coherent.

12.3 Ross to explore security measures. The focus recently has been working with Property Committee in preparing relevant budget input for next year. Security will be the next issue to discuss.

12.4 Shelagh to work with volunteers in creating a list of people who might have skills that we are seeking.

13. New Business – Preparation for 23 October 2022 Congregational Meeting

13.1 Advise Moira Nasim and Robin Breckon that our preference is for coffee, tea and cookies to be served in the sanctuary, between the end of the worship service and the beginning of the Congregational Meeting. This seems simpler and quicker than offering cheese and fruit.

13.2 We ask Shelagh to open the Congregational Meeting, reminding people of the mixed emotions being experienced by many and asking for patience as we seek to hear each other. She will also introduce the enabling motions about the election of a chair, until such person assumes the role.

13.3 The necessary Power Point slides, containing information about the motions, etc, will be prepared by Ross Breckon and forwarded to the AV team, via Joan Mason. Larry will also forward a final version of the Agenda to Ross, for inclusion in the slides.

13.4 According to the Manual, only those present in person or by phone or by Zoom, are allowed to vote. The other voting issue is that we vote by show of hands, but if someone requests voting by secret ballot, we need to be prepared for that possibility. Larry to prepare ballots, in case they are needed. Those who vote on Zoom can do so in the Chat window; Liane Clark will monitor the Zoom setup. The ballots can be counted by the two students who would be working at the AV console; they would be neutral monitors for that purpose. Larry will ask them.

13.5 If the amalgamation motion passes, the congregation needs to hear how the Amalgamation Working Group will get formed, who is eligible to serve on it. Cheryl and Edeana to explain.

13.6 Edeana, as Chair of the Board, will give Closing Remarks at the end of the Congregational Meeting. Shelagh will offer a final blessing.

14. Actions To Be Taken from Decisions Made at This Board Meeting:

14.1 Ross to initiate security discussion. Item 12.3

14.2 Larry to make sure a congregational letter is sent out by email tomorrow. Item 10.1.8

14.3 Ross to bring Draft Budget 2023 to the next meeting. Item 7.4 b) Also discuss budget with the congregation.

14.4 Larry to oversee details for Congregational Meeting. Item 13.

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14.5 Future discussion on volunteer welcomers, requested by Shelagh. Item 11.2

14.6 Future Search Group to meet 15 October 2022 at 10:45 am, for purpose of recommending a list of potential members for the Amalgamation Working Group, assuming amalgamation motion passes. Cheryl Black to convey results to Edeana, who will decide process for Board to ratify membership of said committee. Item 13.5

15. Next Board Meeting – 23 November 2022, at 3:00 pm via Zoom.

This is one week later than normal, as Shelagh will still be away on vacation on the third Wednesday of the month.

16. Adjournment by the Chair was at 5:00 pm.

Chair, Edeana Malcolm

Secretary, Larry Scott

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RECEIVED BY SECRETARY OF BOARD: FUTURE SEARCH GROUP REPORT 2022

<p>GROUPING As of 4 October 2022</p>	<p>COMMENTS (from congregational meeting, Zoom meetings, small group sessions, emails to Board Secretary) <i>Some comments are repeated by the same person, in the congregational meeting setting and in the small group; those comments appear twice, sometimes with slightly different wording.</i></p>
<p>1. Option 5: Amalgamation</p>	<p>Amalgamation implies intentional revitalization, or the initiative is not worthwhile. Amalgamation in 1997 took a lot of time and energy; is amalgamation less complex now, or the same? Are mergers with other denominations or faith groups being considered as part of Amalgamation? Are there any other churches to join downtown? Concerning the Amalgamation option: If there is a new location in amalgamation, access to transportation will be important to those of First Met who use the bus system. Do other Churches want amalgamation? Have you put out feelers to other churches about amalgamation? Which United Churches would be the most open to this idea? How do we choose a name for the amalgamated congregation? How do you choose a name? How exactly would amalgamation happen? We don't know enough to decide. How many years would an amalgamation process take? How fast could it happen? How would the amalgamation process unfold and how would it be facilitated? If amalgamation is the congregation's choice, any delay in this process will lead to a rapid loss of congregational numbers; how soon could amalgamation in principle happen? Is there a shortlist of potential United Churches that we could amalgamate with? One congregant thought that amalgamation was a necessary option, although a follow up comment suggested that an amalgamation with another church populated primarily by old people would only delay the time of collapse of the amalgamated congregation. One couple simply said they support amalgamation, without further comment. See amalgamation/cooperation with a Kairos church. The standard amalgamation looks like a lot of work; what happens if our partner has an older demographic too? What does 'visionary amalgamation' mean exactly? What happens to the staff in both congregations, in an amalgamation process? Why will it [amalgamation] take two years? Would we explore ecumenical ministries as prospects for amalgamation?</p>

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<p>2. Demographics: Aging, Lack of Youth</p>	<p>“A number of comments dealt with the concept of church and the disengagement of young people from the past concepts and practices. The comments highlighted some apparent differences between concepts of older people and youth. For example, one point of view about what was attractive to older people was the notion of worshipping with a community of people who also appreciated that practice. Others noted that this seemed to have little or no value among younger people.” <i>Quoted from recorder of small group discussion.</i></p> <p>Perhaps the concept of worship itself seems meaningless [to younger people].</p> <p>Some thought that young people are interested in working for a cause (social or environmental) but not in preserving a building.</p> <p>Young adults and young families don’t want to be in a congregation of elders who expect them to do the same work that those elders did earlier.</p> <p>Time pressures on young families was also cited as a negative factor in them being involved in a church.</p> <p>I am now of an age where I live in Long Term Care and do not have the time or disposable income to help the church in a new direction; perhaps a number of congregants are in my situation.</p>
<p>3. Pacific Mountain Region: Role, Influence</p>	<p>Do we know how Pacific Mountain Region would regard amalgamation? Property issues?</p> <p>Does the national Church have a concern with First Met surviving?</p> <p>Does the PMR offered guidance or help to a congregation in First Met's situation?</p> <p>How much can the Pacific Mount Region help with grants? [Options included grants from PMR]</p> <p>What role does the Pacific Mountain Region have in overseeing First Met’s future?</p> <p>The report cites 2016 as a benchmark date for making a number of comparisons. Was 2016 the year that Allan Saunders retired? This led to a discussion which was critical of the process established by United Church authorities for managing the appointment of a new minister after the resignation of a minister.</p> <p>We had a setback and loss of momentum because of the long period required for an interim minister.</p>
<p>4. Option 6, Legacy</p>	<p>I think I prefer option 6 if the charity created could be focused on serving the North Park neighbourhood. It would be a good legacy in the name of First Met. I live in the North Park neighbourhood.</p> <p>I think the best thing to do is Option 6, Creating a Legacy.</p> <p>In an amalgamation or sale, could we keep our library, online resources, archived material?</p> <p>Why is only Option 6 the only thing left, if we don’t like amalgamation?</p> <p>I prefer Option 6 and would like to see a legacy house for new families (refugees or immigrants) to help them get established, until they can find their own space. Our own congregants could still see each other in the churches we disperse to.</p>

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<p>5. Heritage Designation</p>	<p>An observation was made that it seems that our Heritage Building designation is the source of the problem. Another person commented that the City’s move years ago to push downtown Churches to obtain the Heritage Designation has led to problems for many of the congregations who chose that path.</p> <p>Can we remove the Heritage designation from our Heritage Building? Effect of Heritage designation of Sanctuary building on selling price? Has our Heritage designation been seriously discussed with the City? We need to explore the prospect of removing the heritage status of the HBA.</p>
<p>6. Affirmation of Report</p>	<p>I am impressed with the work done; the report is very clear and very thorough. Stellar research commended. All possible options were considered, with pros and cons. Good clarity. The report is brilliant, clear, comprehensive; it confirms what we have known but not named. We appreciate that the data is hard information, not just opinion or speculation. What process did you use to arrive at six options?</p>
<p>7. Selling Property</p>	<p>Could we sell off our parking rights? Effect of seismic and other needs on selling price? Once you sell the church, then First Met is gone. Partner with community agencies that serve psycho-social needs and sell part of the property to fund this new form of outreach. We need to market the services that we offer. What is the feasibility and implications of subdividing the main property, around the center of the Balmoral parking lot, so sanctuary and part of the CE wing is attached to the Heritage property, and the library, archives, Fellowship hall and social suite etc are on a separate lot? Could the new eastern lot be sold as is, subject to the east end of the CE wing being detached from the rest of the CE wing [approx. where Balmoral housing entrance is]? Purchaser could decide what to do with the Fellowship hall and furnace/heating.</p>
<p>8. Finances, Costs</p>	<p>Budgeting deficits can’t continue. By using our memorial funds to cover deficits are we losing Faith with those making bequests. Strongly disagree with First Met encroaching on the Capital of the Trusts. When the decision was made years ago to permit this, we broke our trust with those who made bequests. How much risk and how much cost is there associated with earthquake and seismic upgrading? Is there any way of reducing the operating costs of First Met with option 1 or 2?</p>

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<p>9. St. John the Divine</p>	<p>Could closer cooperation with St. John the Divine be a better option than amalgamation with a United Church in another area? We worked well on refugees with St. John the Divine; can we amalgamate with them? Where is St. John the Devine Anglican Church in this kind of process?</p>
<p>10. North Park Neighbourhood</p>	<p>Do we know the need of the North Park neighbourhood, it we were thinking of leaving some kind of legacy to the community? How much are the non-physical assets of the First Met organization to the community? [sic] The option that would serve the neighbourhood the best is Option 6.</p>
<p>11. Maintain core spiritual values</p>	<p>The risk of changing is dynamic and may affect each member differently. For some “music and message” are most important. For others “being comfortable and welcome in expressing their faith” is most important. Wally Lazaruk’s statement: What is the best decision that First Met can make to maintain and grow its Spirit, identity, and legacy for the current and future generations? What is feasible? What does Spirit say when we ask: What is the best future for First Met? What is in the best interest of everyone here? How do we apply First Met’s core values in the current situation? What does being faithful mean to the congregation?</p>
<p>12. Option 2, Revitalize in Place</p>	<p>Are there examples of a successful revitalization? Are we unable to build our membership?</p>
<p>13. Impact of grief, shock, COVID</p>	<p>Has the Board or Future Search Group considered the degree of shock, grief, post COVID malaise, as impact on congregation to be making a major decision at this time? No provision to process grief. I didn’t realize that things were this bad. People are fearful about the future. We have anticipatory grief.</p>
<p>14. Communication</p>	<p>Good communication is necessary. People are confused about what they are hearing. Some are not aware that a major decision is being made. Some people think “the decision” was made at a congregational meeting on September 18, so why are there more meetings? Have we involved those interested congregants who don’t attend church now, or who are otherwise still connected, but not visibly participating?</p>
<p>15. Close</p>	<p>First Met is in a hopeless/impossible situation. Quotation from Teilhard de Chardin predicting end of Christianity; why try to extend life of a dying reality in 21st century? <i>(Comments to close, without reference to Option 6.)</i></p>

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16. AbbeyChurch	How much is the “Abby Church” costing First Met? Why was congregation not consulted about renting Sunday space to AbbeyChurch? Are we subsidizing another church (mainly heating) and worsening our financial situation?
17. Leadership	Do these transitions imply a leadership change? How is this decided?
18. Our Place	What is the status of Our Place wanting to use any of our facilities (rental income)?
19. Option Combos	Consider combining Options 5 & 6
20 Centennial UC	What is the state of Centennial United Church?
21. Broad View UC	Has there been any inquiry to Broad View United Church about its openness to amalgamation?
22. Other Churches	Did you look at other churches who have come up with different solutions for their decline?
	ATTENDANCE AT THE VARIOUS DISCUSSIONS
18 Sept. Cong. Mtg	34 people attended Congregational Meeting. List of attendees is at beginning of Draft Minutes.
19 Sept. Zoom Mtg	18 people: Black, Cheryl; Breckon, Ross; Clough, Sue; Clugston, Peter; Denton, Marion; Foskett, Bill; Foskett, Bonnie; Gray, Janet; Gray, Steve; Henderson, Jacquie; Holmen, Linden; Lazaruk, Wall; Matsuo-Saunders, Megumi; McKee, Marie; Rolston, Barry; Scott, Larry; Sikstrom, Anne; Thomson, Joyce.
22 Sept. in person DMR	7 people: Alva & Earl Jensen; Liane Clark; Shelagh MacKinnon; Kyla Morgan; Ross Breckon; Larry Scott.
28 Sept. in person DMR	8 people: Black, Cheryl; Chamberlin, David; Chamberlin, Gilian; Denton, Marion; Higgins, Sharron; Holmen, Linden; MacKinnon, Shelagh; Morgan, Kyla.
3 Oct. Zoom	17 people: Black, Cheryl; Breckon, Ross; Denton, Marion; Gray, Janet; Gray, Steve; Henderson, Hayley; Holmen, Linden; Jenkins, Paul; Longley, Paul; Lowery, Clare; Mathis, Freni; Mathis, Heini; Nelson, Forrest; Newhouse, Carol; Newhouse, John; Preswich, Leanne; Scott, Larry.
	Chapel Group decided to send individual responses, rather than discuss FSG as a group.
	Men’s Pub Group: 3 or 4 men discussed report (in addition to FSG reps present).

APPENDIX 2: CONGREGATIONAL LETTER

Dear Members and Adherents of FirstMet,

On Sunday, 23 October 2022, First Met will be conducting a Congregational Meeting immediately following the 11:00 am service. The purpose of the meeting is of the utmost importance for the congregation, as it deals with our choice of a future direction for FirstMet. I encourage all to attend, in-person if you can, or on-line by way of Zoom, or by telephone conference call. If you know of someone who can't attend the meeting and who doesn't use Zoom, please let them know that they can be present by phone and participate in the vote. The number to call in, is below:

Topic: Congregational Meeting Time: Oct 23, 2022 12:00 PM Victoria Time

Join Zoom Meeting via any device:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87824815887?pwd=TFQva2pjVy9tZjBDTHYrc0lmV3drdz09>

Join via telephone for free: +1 778 907 2071 Canada

Meeting ID: 878 2481 5887 Passcode: 332416

The meeting will start at approximately 12:00 pm and you will be able to vote using Zoom or phone. At this meeting your Board will be unanimously recommending the following motion for your decision:

Motion: “That the Congregation of First Metropolitan United Church chooses the path of Amalgamation and instructs the Board to begin the process of finding a United Church congregation with whom to partner.”

We know this is a big decision that will alter the direction of our beloved church and lead us on a course of change. Therefore, we want to remind you of some of the factors that lead your Board to this path.

- i. Many years ago, we knew something significant had to happen to address the financial difficulties, the large building repairs, the aging demographics of our members. So, we embarked on a path of successive property redevelopment proposals.
- ii. Through no fault of our own, these initiatives were not successful.
- iii. We set up a Future Search Group, (FSG) to explore six future options for the congregation. After in-depth analysis the Group recommended Amalgamation as a positive pathway to revitalization and renewal.
- iv. The Executive Summary of the report was emailed to the Members and Adherents and 62 were mailed to those on our mailing list. It was also posted on the Church web page. The full report was available upon request (by email) or for pickup at the church.
- v. This report was presented to the Congregation and a series of group discussions were offered, both in person and on-line.
- vi. A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the members and adherents both virtually, through mail-out and in paper format at the office. Out of the 310 questionnaires distributed, 38 were completed and returned, a response rate of 12.25%. The main intent of the survey was to provide an opportunity to respondents to assess whether the analysis of the survey supported the conclusion and

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recommendations of the report. **The results constitute a general endorsement of the analysis carried out by the FSG** as shown in the table below. The table lists the number of the questions 1 to 6 and then the responses (yes or no), where “yes” indicates that the analysis supports the conclusions and recommendations and “no” indicates that it does not.

Question No.	Yes (%)	No (%)	Question No.	Yes (%)	No (%)
1a	82.9	17.1	3/4c	97.0	3.0
1b	94.1	5.9	5a	88.6	11.4
1c	94.1	5.9	5b	88.6	11.4
2a	77.1	22.9	5c	87.9	12.1
2b	82.4	17.6	6a	91.4	8.6
2c	84.8	15.2	6b	90.9	9.1
3/4a	85.7	14.3	6c	91.2	8.8
3/4b	93.9	6.1	Average	88.7	11.3

In addition, the questionnaire results indicated that 77.1% of respondents support amalgamation.

All this material has been part of the Future Search Group and the Board’s deliberations that have led to our recommendation of the Amalgamation path, for Sunday.

We hope as many of you as possible will attend in person or through the indicated Zoom link or telephone call, so we can talk and decide together the next step on our journey of faith.

Sincerely,

Edeana Malcolm – Board Chair