

# Revised Proposal: Unity Members Joining Hope Lutheran Church

*For Congregational Discernment and Decision*

## Purpose

This proposal outlines a pathway for members of Unity Mission Church to become members of Hope Lutheran Church, grounded in shared Christian faith, Lutheran theology, and a desire to continue living out God's mission together in a changing context.

This proposal has been revised following the February 22, 2026 meeting of Unity members. After that meeting, additional clarity was provided to the leadership of Hope Lutheran Church about the importance of retaining Cantonese language worship services on Sundays to allow for a more organic transition. Updated parts of the proposal are noted in *italic text*.

## What Is Being Proposed

### Membership

Unity members who are interested in joining Hope would participate in a “*get to know each other*” session hosted by Pastor Greg in *March*. *This session, as well as informal conversations throughout March, will introduce Lutheran theology, explore how faith is lived out at Hope, provide Unity members a chance to share their faith journeys and interests, provide space for questions, and support relationship-building and shared understanding.*

Those who choose to *do so will* formally transfer their membership to Hope Lutheran Church and be welcomed during a New Member Celebration on Easter Sunday as part of worship. *For clarity, members of Unity do not need to be present on Easter Sunday to transfer their membership, but they do need to confirm with Pastor Greg that they wish to become members of Hope.*

### Worship and Community Life

The proposal envisions *that, in the long term, there will be* one shared Sunday morning worship service. This service would be offered primarily in English, with intentional accommodations for Cantonese-speaking members. These accommodations are intended to support understanding, participation, and belonging, while remaining one worshiping community.

*After the transition takes place on Easter Sunday, Unity members who wish to do so will continue worshipping on Sunday mornings in a Cantonese speaking service. These services will be planned and led by lay volunteers from the Unity community, supported by Cantonese-speaker supply preachers.*

*Supply preachers do not need to be ELCIC pastors, but they do need to align with the values of Hope as a faith community by promoting belonging, grace, faithfulness, and compassion. Supply preachers will be paid a stipend by Hope and scheduled with support from Unity members who are more familiar with Cantonese speaking preachers in the city. In the event that a Cantonese speaking preacher cannot be found for a particular Sunday, we will work together*

*to support other ways for Cantonese speaking worshippers to hear the Gospel in their preferred language.*

*At least once per month, those worshipping with the Cantonese service will have the opportunity to receive Communion, either by attending the English language service or by having Pastor Greg attend the Cantonese service (timing dependent).*

*The timing and location of the Cantonese service is yet to be determined. This decision will be made by Unity members and Hope leaders in a collaborative discussion, taking into consideration issues such as shared fellowship, vibrancy of worship space, availability of preachers, and children's ministry. The decision will be grounded in our values of belonging, grace, faithfulness, and compassion.*

Unity worship leaders are invited to contribute alongside Hope's worship leaders, and Unity members are encouraged to serve as volunteers in worship as members of Hope. This approach is grounded in reciprocity, two-way learning, and thoughtful experimentation, with openness from both communities to learn from one another.

## **Ministry Structure and Finances**

There would be one unified Hope budget. No separate Unity accounts would be created.

Hope would intentionally establish a Chinese Ministry within the life of the congregation to support shared mission and community. The scope of this ministry would be developed over time through Hope's regular budgeting and governance processes and informed by Synod funding decisions.

## **Governance and Leadership**

Under Hope's bylaws, only members of Hope may serve on Church Council. As a result, Unity members *were not* eligible for election to Council at its February 22<sup>nd</sup> *Annual General Meeting*.

Once Unity members have formally joined Hope, Hope Council *will* appoint two former Unity members to Council, using existing bylaw provisions for appointments.

*While former Unity members will be appointed by the current Hope Council, direction on who to appoint will be provided by former members of Unity through a voting process. For clarity, once members have formally transferred to Hope, all former Unity members will be invited to put their names forward to serve on Hope Council. Those interested in serving on Hope Council will be expected to:*

- *Provide a statement of interest to say why they want to serve on Council and the skills, interests, and experience they would bring to that role*
- *Agree to actively engage and build relationships with all those who are involved in the new Chinese Ministry at Hope to be able to reflect the community's views in Hope's decision-making*
- *Agree to actively participate in all Hope Council discussions and activities concerning the broader church*

*Former members of Unity will then be invited to vote on who they want to serve in those two Council positions. The two candidates with the most votes who meet the criteria above will be appointed by Hope Council.*

A Transition (or Integration) Committee *will* also be established to support communication, surface questions, and help address pastoral, cultural, and practical concerns during the transition period. *The Terms of Reference for this Committee will be co-developed by members of that Committee, which will include former Unity members and current members of Hope.*

No bylaw changes are required to support this proposal.

## **Pastoral Care**

Hope's pastoral staff would assume responsibility for pastoral care. Unity's Mission Pastor *will* not continue in that role after *March 31, 2026*.

Pastor Greg is committed to working closely with Unity members to understand their pastoral needs and to developing the skills and relationships required to minister across cultures and languages. Future language-specific pastoral care needs would be addressed through the Transition Committee and Council.

## **Theology and Identity**

Hope Lutheran Church is firmly rooted in Lutheran theology and is a committed member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Joining Hope means joining this theological and ecclesial tradition.

This proposal is not a merger of equals, nor a takeover. Hope holds greater institutional continuity and resources and names this reality with humility.

Unity Mission Church *will* dissolve as an entity, and its members *will* join Hope. In response, Hope *will* intentionally create a new ministry expression to honour, support, and integrate the gifts and calling of those members within the broader Hope community, *including continuing offering worship services in Cantonese.*