



Planning Our Future: Questions & Answers

We understand that news about long-term planning for our church property will raise important questions. We hope this document provides clarity and reassurance.

1. Why is the church doing this now?

For several years, St. James has been facing serious financial and demographic challenges. Our costs to operate our large building exceed our income, and our congregation is smaller and older than it once was. The facts show that simply trying to increase rentals and donations is not enough to solve these long-term structural problems. We are acting now from a position of foresight, not desperation, to ensure a sustainable future for our ministry.

2. Is St. James closing? No.

This process is about ensuring St. James has a vibrant and sustainable future. Our ministry, worship services, and programs will continue for the foreseeable future. This planning work is about finding a long-term solution so that our ministry can continue for generations to come.

3. What does "property redevelopment" actually mean?

It means exploring creative ways to use our largest asset—our land—to support our mission. The vision being investigated is to partner with a developer (like Kindred Works, the United Church's property development arm) to build a new facility on our property that could include:

- A new, smaller, modern, and accessible worship and community space for St. James.
- Mixed-income housing, including affordable units, to serve a need in our community.
- Space for other community-oriented services. This would create a new, financially self-sustaining home for our church, allowing us to focus our resources on ministry, not just maintaining an aging building.

4. Why can't we just focus on increasing rentals and fundraising?

The Strategic Planning Committee has studied our finances over the last 20 years. Their conclusion, presented in a report to the Board, is that even with very optimistic increases in rentals and giving, we cannot close the long-term financial gap. Our building's operating and future capital costs (like replacing our 1960s furnace) are simply too high for our current and projected income.

5. Will the congregation get to vote on this? Yes, absolutely.

The United Church of Canada's rulebook, *The Manual*, is very clear. Any final decision to sell, redevelop, or make major changes to church property **must** be approved by a vote of the full members of the congregation at a properly called congregational meeting. This current phase is only about investigation and planning; no final proposal exists yet. Additionally the Regional Council will need to approve any decision to sell or redevelop the church property.



6. How long will this process take?

This is a multi-year journey. The investigation, planning, consultation, and approval process for a project of this scale will take time. We are at the very beginning.

7. What is "Kindred Works"?

Kindred Works is a property development corporation created by The United Church of Canada. Their mission is to work with congregations like ours to redevelop underutilized church properties to create new sources of revenue and serve community needs, like affordable housing. They ensure that any development aligns with the values of The United Church of Canada.

8. What does this mean for our Sunday services and programs right now?

For the foreseeable future, nothing changes. We will continue to worship in our sanctuary, hold our group meetings, and run our programs as we always have. This long-term planning will happen in the background, while the day-to-day life of St. James continues.

9. How can I share my thoughts or ask more questions?

The Church Board and the Strategic Planning Committee are committed to a transparent process. We will be providing regular updates through the bulletin, the website, and special information sessions. You can also direct your questions to any member of the Church Board or the Strategic Planning Committee.