



# First Met United Church

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## Strategic Plan



# First Metropolitan United Church Mission Statement and Vision Statement

## 1. Mission Statement

As a faith-based community, we are committed to including people of all ages, economic circumstances, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities in all aspects of the life and work of our ministry. Together we seek transformation, engagement and service for ourselves, our community and our world.

## 2. Vision Statement

First Metropolitan is a vibrant, diverse, justice-seeking, faith-based community rooted in downtown Victoria and branching out beyond.



# First Metropolitan United Church

## Goals and Objectives

The Board has identified three goals that will be the focus of our collective energy over the next 5 years to achieve our Vision and provide the foundation upon which we will carry on our Mission for many years into the future:

1. We want to foster transformation and innovation rooted in our progressive Christian faith.
2. We want to support a diverse team of volunteers and staff.
3. We want to transform First Metropolitan United Church through vibrant redevelopment and financial revitalization.

The Board has also identified specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART) objectives that are required to achieve each goal. The following narrative describes each Goal and its associated SMART objectives. Organizational accountability and expected dates for completion are shown for each goal and objective.

The objectives and goals of this plan originally had completion dates built into them. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these dates have been omitted because they are no longer realistic. The Board will revisit the dates, however, because we are committed to realizing these goals and objectives.

# Goal 1: Foster Transformation and Innovation Rooted In Progressive Christian Faith

**Description:** This goal will implement strategies that support church teams, ministries and ad hoc task groups in their efforts to transform and be more relevant to the changing and evolving needs of our congregation, the United Church, and our society.

**Completed By:** Board and teams, committees and task groups

## G1.1: Design and implement a Sunday School program that reflects our progressive Christian theology

**Completed By:** Sunday School Leaders and volunteers, Board

**Description:** Review current curriculum for appropriateness, determine support (e.g.: workshops, classes, events) that Sunday School teachers and



volunteers need to maintain their relevance, and determine what resources are needed to achieve this objective.

## G1.2: Offer youth programs that are relevant, appropriate, and sustainable in collaboration with other United Churches in the area

**Completed By:** Board and Sunday School Leaders and Volunteers

**Description:** Invite other Sunday School Leaders from local United churches in the downtown area to discuss collaboration in order to provide relevant, sustainable and appropriate programming for this age group.

## G1.3: Fulfill the steps of becoming an affirming congregation

**Completed By:** Lead Minister, Affirming Congregation task group, Board

**Description:** First Metropolitan United Church will become an Affirming Congregation which is an intentionally inclusive and welcoming congregation.



**G1.4: Design and conduct a series of conversations to develop First Metropolitan United Church's understanding of Evolving Church and progressive theology.**

**Completed By:** Evolving Church team, Worship and Christian Spiritual Development, Board

**Description:** Success of this objective will be measured by a common language and understanding throughout the congregation.

**G1.5: Engage with the larger community including the North Park neighbourhood as measured by an increasing number of joint events.**

**Completed By:** Evolving Church and special interest teams, Outreach, Lead Minister, Board



**Description:** Develop initiatives (5 in 2020, 6 in 2021, 7 in 2022, 8 in 2023, and 9 in 2024) that will open our doors and our hearts to our neighbours, such as free summer BBQs, Potluck Church, Sing-A-Longs followed by coffee and treats, Christmas Angel Gifts, nightly shelter program, non-partisan all-candidates debates, Tai Chi, healing touch and other programs and measures that will help us become more engaged with our community and our neighbourhood, with the goal of responding more appropriately to local neighbourhood needs in ways that respond to our



Christian faith. This goal is not meant to create new church members.



**G1.6: Review and update the Spiritual Care and Wellness strategic plan yearly and present to the congregation so that Spiritual Care and Wellness can continue to offer programs and services that respond to both the congregation and the community.**

**Completed By:** Spiritual Care and Wellness team, Board

**Description:** The Spiritual Care and Wellness Team currently supports a number of umbrella groups that respond to needs both within and outside FMUC, such as: Prayer Connections, Visitation and



Care Calls, Caregiver Support Group, Healing Pathway, Tai Chi, Gentle Yoga and Chair Yoga, Mindfulness Meditation, Knitting Group, Pastoral Care visits, and Summer Strollers and may



embrace fewer or different ones in the future. This Team also supports education for these programs through the Bursary fund.

**G1.7: Develop and implement a clear mandate and an action plan which will facilitate reconciliation with our local First Nations.**

**Completed By:** Outreach, Worship, Newcomer and Welcoming Teams, Evolving Church team, Board

**Description:** The Outreach Team will work with others, both inside and outside the church including First Nations leaders to implement strategies for Reconciliation, in conjunction with First Metropolitan United Church programs and ministries, that will respond to the needs of our local First Nations people as stated in the “94 Calls for Action”.



**G1.8: Develop a plan on how First Metropolitan United Church will work cooperatively with other organizations to support the settlement of new refugees.**



**Completed By:** Outreach Team, Board

**Description:** FMUC acknowledges that the settlement of refugees in our community is a social justice issue requiring our attention. Our Outreach Team has most recently been working in collaboration with the congregation of St. John The Divine Anglican Church, sponsors of a refugee family who have immigrated to Victoria. This work has come to a successful conclusion and FMUC must now chart a course forward to continue our actions in this arena of social justice. We will use the lessons learned from our recent

work with St. John The Divine, the experience of other United Church Congregations across Canada and the policies and programs put in place by the General Council of the United Church of Canada, to decide how best for us to move forward.

**G1.9: Update and renew our worship life**

**Completed By:** Worship and Christian Spiritual Development Team, Music Team, Board

**Description:** The Lead Minister and Music Director will work together to update and renew our worship life to reflect a more progressive understanding of our faith with more contemporary hymns and music, songs, prayers, and spoken theology. One measurement is that 50% of hymns and music would be 50 years or newer.



# Goal 2: Support A Diverse Team of Volunteers and Staff

Description: This Goal lays out how we will nurture and manage our human resources over the next five years to help us achieve our primary goal. We believe that First Met is first and foremost a diverse group of human beings with the common purpose to worship and practice Christianity in the best way we can to create a better world for all who live in it with us. We depend on our volunteers and staff to do this.

Completed By: Board and teams, committees and task groups



## G2.1: Determine which ministries are essential

Completed By: Board, Team Leaders, Congregation

Description: Develop criteria to determine what is essential. Determine if the HALO project can help with determining which ministries are essential and with communicating why they are essential. The pilot ministry for review will be memorial services. Implement an ongoing annual review process to continue identifying essential ministries.

## G2.2: Create the position of coordinator of volunteers

Completed By: Board, Team Leaders

Description: Hold conversations around volunteer coordination with Team Leaders, Volunteer Victoria, ICA, Our Place and other volunteer organizations. Use input to create a job description for the position of Coordinator of Volunteers. Fill the position.



## G2.3: Support and expand our volunteer base

Completed By: Coordinator of Volunteers, Team Leaders, Board



Description: Develop a communication plan to explain to the congregation the programs and ministries and the list of volunteer positions available with a brief description of what each job entails. Evaluate unfilled volunteer positions and determine the best way to fill any gaps. Review the already prepared materials for volunteer management, revise materials where necessary, develop a plan to “catch up” current volunteers, and develop a plan to onboard and maintain new volunteers. Recognize and celebrate volunteers on a regular basis.

## G2.4: Determine and implement best practices for welcoming and retaining community of faith participants

**Completed By:** Hospitality Team, Newcomer Advisory Network Team, Communications Team, Board

**Description:** Consult with others on best practices for welcoming and retaining community of faith participants including recognition of diversity. Conduct discussions on merging Hospitality and Newcomers Advisory Network teams. Implement results of consultations and discussions.



## G2.5: Prepare and implement a short and long-term succession plan for paid staff and key volunteers



**Completed By:** Ministry & Personnel Committee, Coordinator of Volunteers, Board

**Description:** Have discussions with present staff to know future plans including retirement dates. Find out what suggestions they have regarding succession. What do they see as needing to be changed in their job description? Prepare new job descriptions based on our needs and their suggestions and update annually. Have discussions with key volunteers to know future plans including stepping down dates. Find out what suggestions they have regarding succession. Assign ongoing responsibility for staff and volunteer plan maintenance to appropriate teams. Gail Miller is a possible resource in this area.

## G2.6: Develop a staffing plan

**Completed By:** Ministry and Personnel Committee

**Description:** In consideration of our Strategic Plan as a whole, determine what staff would be optimal to carry out the objectives of the plan. Consider if we have the resources to hire any additional staff that is required. After a review with current staff members, determine which tasks are essential to continue and what would be the most efficient staff complement to carry out those tasks.

# Goal 3: Transform The Church Through Vibrant Redevelopment and Financial Revitalization

**Description:** The transformation and revitalization of our physical and financial assets over the next five years will lead First Met to a sustainable future as a vital and vibrant downtown Victoria church.

The redevelopment and restoration project that First Met launched in 2018, in partnership with the Pacific Mountain Region, is a multi-year project with two major phases. Phase 1 of the project will focus on restoring major structural components of the Heritage Building and Annex (HBA) and redeveloping the site of the Fellowship Hall and Christian Education Wing into a multi-storey rental apartment complex containing a significant component of affordable housing. It is



expected that Phase 1 will be completed over the five-year time frame of this strategic plan and will involve a temporary relocation of Church operations while construction is taking place.



Phase 2 of the Project will begin after Phase 1 is complete and will focus on further restoration of the HBA to improve the functionality of the interior spaces and the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the building. The detailed plans for Phase 2 will be confirmed during Phase 1. Phase 2 is expected to consist of a series of smaller projects spread out over ten to fifteen years. The Board feels that the revitalization of our financial assets is also necessary for First Met to achieve its primary Goals in the decades ahead. Hand in hand with the redevelopment and restoration

project First Met must continue efforts to enhance the management of our financial assets in a fiscally responsible way. In the face of declining givings, as First Met embarks on its journey to explore new ways of “doing Church”, we must also seek new ways of “raising funds” to support our ministries, programs and services for the congregation and the communities we serve.

**Completed By:** Pacific Mountain Region Property Resource Team (PRT), Redevelopment Task Group (RTG), Finance & Administration Team, Board

### **G3.1: Complete a detailed plan of Phase 1 activities for the redevelopment and restoration project**

**Completed By:** PRT & RTG, Board

**Description:** Complete a detailed Phase 1 activity plan for the project identifying the dates and deliverables for each activity to be undertaken by the RTG and/or FMUC and the relationship of those activities to the key project milestones.

### **G3.2: Complete a comprehensive project communication plan for Phase 1 of the redevelopment and restoration project**

**Completed By:** PRT & RTG, Board

**Description:** Complete a comprehensive communications plan for informing and engaging Church Leadership, Congregation members, the neighbourhood communities, the general public and municipal officials on matters concerning Phase 1 activities and key project milestones.

### **G3.3: Learn about promising practices around fundraising and implement updated and operational policies, processes, and procedures**

**Completed By:** Finance & Administration Standing Committee, Board of Trustees, Board

**Description:** Do a comprehensive review of how other registered charities and non-profits do fundraising for general funds and programs and giving patterns of each generation. Review how other registered charities and non-profits build relationships with current donors and attract new donors. Compare review results with First Met's current process of Legacy Circle, stewardship campaigns, pledging, financial appeals, events and online giving opportunities. Review and change where necessary the processes, policies and procedures related to raising funds to better align asking for and collecting donations with how people give.



### **G3.4: Select a temporary location(s) for FMUC worship and operation during Phase 1 of the redevelopment and restoration project**

**Completed By:** RTG, Board

**Description:** Complete research, identification, selection, negotiation and approval of one or more temporary locations from which FMUC can conduct its worship and operations while its Balmoral Rd buildings are inaccessible during Phase 1 construction activities.

### **G3.5: Relocate to temporary location(s) for FMUC worship and operation during Phase 1 of the redevelopment and restoration project**

**Completed By:** RTG, Board

**Description:** Complete the planning for and the relocation of staff, volunteers, ministry vestments and accoutrements, program and office supplies, furniture, and files needed for the ongoing operation of the Church from its temporary location (s) during Phase 1 construction activities.

### **G3.6: Update letting processes, policies, and procedures to meet customer and First Met needs**

**Completed By:** Finance & Administration Standing Committee, Property Standing Committee, Board

**Description:** Review all letting processes, policies, procedures and pricing to ensure First Met interests are protected. Ensure pricing reflects true cost of room use and eliminate discounts. Simplify processes to reduce administrative and custodial time spent on letting. Simplify processes to reduce customer time spent on letting.



**G3.7: Relocate from First Met temporary location(s) to Balmoral Road Building at completion of Phase 1 of the Redevelopment And Restoration Project**

**Completed By:** RTG, Board

**Description:** Complete the planning for and the return of staff, volunteers, ministry vestments and accoutrements, program and office supplies, furniture, and files needed for the ongoing operation of the Church from its temporary location (s) back to FMUC’s Balmoral Rd building after Phase 1 construction activities have been completed.

**G3.8: Perform a strategic annual plan review**

**Completed By:** Board, Team Leaders

**Description:** Update, at least yearly, progress on and changes to the strategic plan and associated documents such as the rolling five-year budgets. Provide First Met Foundation Board of Trustees with insight into the financial support required from the Foundation to support the strategic plan.



*In this building, from this building, ministry and more happen.*

# Glossary of Terms

## **Vision Statement**

The Vision Statement succinctly describes the desired future state of the Church at a defined point of time in the future.

## **Mission Statement**

The Mission Statement succinctly describes the Church's purpose, primary objectives and approach to achieve those objectives.

## **Core Values and Beliefs**

A set of values and beliefs that the Church "lives and breathes" through its congregation members, adherents and staff, inside the Church community and outside in the broader community that it serves.

## **Guiding Principles**

Guiding principles are a set of moral values that establishes a framework for expected behavior and decision-making. It is a list of highly-regarded and expected principles set by the Church when implementing action plans in support of the Strategic Plan.

## **Justice-seeking**

In the Bible, Micah 8:6 says, "What does your God require of you? To love kindness, to seek justice, to walk humbly with your God." In the New Creed of the United Church of Canada, we pledge to "seek justice." By justice, we mean distributive or social justice, rather than retributive or legal justice. This means we work towards a society which guarantees the common welfare by sharing what God has created.

## **Progressive Christianity**

Progressive Christianity is characterized by a willingness to question tradition, acceptance of human diversity, a strong emphasis on social justice and care for the poor and oppressed, and environmental stewardship of the earth.

And from Wolsey, Richard: *Kissing Fish: Christianity for People who Don't Like Christianity* 2011.

"Progressive Christianity is a movement that emphasizes the Way and teachings of Jesus, not merely his person. It leans towards salvation here and now instead of primarily in heaven later; takes the Bible seriously but not literally; embraces a more interpretive, metaphorical understanding of the Bible; does not claim that Christianity is the only valid way to connect to God (is non-exclusive)".

## **First Met Teams and Task Groups**

Teams and Task Groups are the engine of the Church in fulfilling our Mission on our journey to realize our Vision. Teams and Task Groups are collections of congregation members, adherents and staff members who come together to lead and support the delivery of our ministries and programs to the Congregation and the community at large. The work of Teams and Task Groups is sanctioned with the approval by the Board of terms of reference or mandate statements. Formerly the term “Committee” was used to identify Teams and Task Groups. ”Teams” are responsible for on-going Church ministries, programs and operations (e.g. Pastoral Care Team, Health & Wellness Team, Finance & Administration Team) whereas “Task Groups” are responsible for project-oriented work (e.g. Redevelopment Task Group).

## **Ministry**

“Ministry” and “service” are used synonymously in this document meaning “ministering aid or assistance” except where “ministry” means “relating to the minister” (e.g. Ministry and Personnel Committee, ministry vestments)

## **Service**

“Ministry” and “service” are used synonymously in this document meaning “ministering aid or assistance” except where “service” means a meeting of congregation for worship (e.g. memorial services)

## **Program**

“Program” is similar in meaning to “ministry” and “service” in this document, but refers to more specific and on-going ministry work (e.g. Sunday School program, nightly shelter program)

## **Sunday School**

First Met Sunday school is an inclusive and caring community of families with youth of all ages, where learning and creativity are supported and encouraged, and the lessons of our Christian faith and global family are shared, explored and celebrated.

## Affirming Congregation

“We affirm that gender and sexuality are gifts of God, and welcome people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.” Affirm United/ S’affirmer Ensemble works for the full inclusion of people of all gender identities and sexual orientations in the United Church of Canada and in society. We draw strength and hope from biblical stories of liberation; from the prophetic call to live justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God; and from Jesus’ witness to God’s inclusive love.

## Evolving Church (formerly known as “Weird Church” from the book of the same name by Beth Ann Estock and Paul Nixon)

The book *Weird Church* describes a framework for understanding what’s happening today in society (the move toward a more secular society and the closing of churches). It presents ideas and ways to work towards evolution of the traditional church to one that speaks to newer generations of people who are looking for spirituality but not in the form of the traditional church.

Some of the examples in the book talk about becoming more outer-directed than inner-directed; to having “dinner party church” where people have a meal and discussion, and not necessarily on Sunday; to meeting in community centres; to having community based enterprises and Innovation Labs in order to provide such things as work training for the unemployed. These are just a few examples of creating new ways of being church.

## Reconciliation

(from the work of **Bob Joseph**, of the Gwawaenuk Nation)

The TRC definition of reconciliation:

“ . . . Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.”

To flesh out what reconciliation is and is not, here's a list of considerations that may contribute to understanding reconciliation.

### Reconciliation is:

- Complex
- Multifaceted
- Continuous
- A process
- About working towards solidarity as a society and country
- The responsibility of every Canadian
- Honouring **treaties**
- Acknowledging and respecting Indigenous **rights and title**
- Acknowledging and letting go of negative **perceptions and stereotypes**
- Acknowledging the past and ensuring that history never repeats
- Learning about Indigenous history
- Recognizing the intergenerational impacts of colonization, attempts at assimilation, and cultural genocide
- Recognizing the critical roles, Indigenous Peoples have held in the creation of Canada, their contributions to **world wars** to protect Canada

Taking responsibility as a person, a parent, an employee, an employer to:

- Never utter, accept, or ignore a racist comment
- Never utter, accept, or ignore a statement that includes a stereotype about Indigenous Peoples

Reconciliation also means respect for:

- Indigenous individuals
- Indigenous **beliefs, cultures**, traditions, **worldviews**, challenges, and goals
- Recognition and support of the deep connections Indigenous Peoples have to the land.
- Supporting the reclamation of **identity, language**, culture, and nationhood
- Healing for all Canadians
- Good people doing good things
- Building **relationships**
- Never giving up despite setbacks
- Humility
- An opportunity to move forward
- A commitment to taking a role and assuming responsibility in working towards a better future for every Canadian

## The Halo Project

The Halo Project is an attempt to try and determine just how all that we do as a community of faith adds up in terms of contributions to the common good. This ‘determining’ is about measurement - putting some quantity around common goods that are difficult to define. Pioneering work done by Ram Cnaan in 2010 at the University of Pennsylvania attempted to put a value on the work of ordinary, local congregations in Philadelphia. Following a hunch, Dr. Cnaan and his team used established measurement tools developed to value things like hockey tournaments, conferences and other somewhat intangible functions in communities but turned them to a community organization not typically analyzed in economic terms.

Put another way, the question they were chasing was simply, “If this congregation disappeared tomorrow and we had to replace everything, including all of the social supports, programs, care, and so on, what would that cost?” The surprising discovery was that the full value of the work done by an ordinary neighbourhood congregation, even of modest size, is 4-5 times the value of their annual budget. That means their contribution to the common good, the social infrastructure of their communities, is strongly generative.

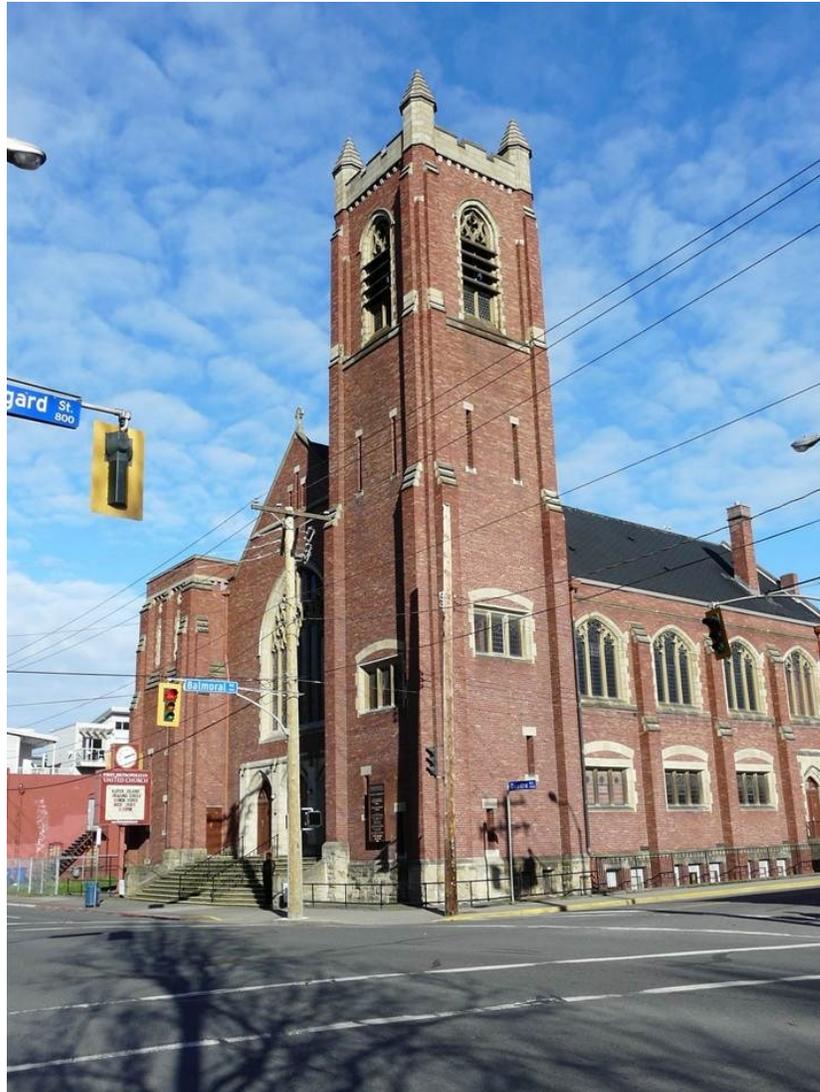
## Fundraising

Fundraising is defined as the process of soliciting financial support. Fundraising is about so much more than just asking for money. It also consists of ways for charitable organizations to build relationships, bring in foundation support, and attract new donors.

# Notes

# First Metropolitan United Church of Canada

*A centre for  
spiritual growth and  
community engagement*



First Metropolitan United Church of Canada

932 Balmoral Road, Victoria, BC, V8T 1A8

(250) 388-5188

<https://www.firstmetvictoria.com/>