

Exploring Amalgamation Faithfully

Participant Workbook



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Exploring Amalgamation Faithfully

A Participant Workbook for Getting to Know One Another

For use with *Amalgamating – Steps for Beginning Well: Leaders Guide*
(Initial Conversations Phase)

Welcome

This workbook is designed to support congregations who are **exploring amalgamation as a discernment process**, not as a predetermined decision.

You are invited to:

- write honestly
- listen generously
- honour both hope and hesitation

**Exploring amalgamation does not commit your congregation to proceed.
Faithful discernment includes the possibility of continuing separately.**

How to Use This Workbook

- Write freely — these pages are for you
- There are no “right” answers
- Speak from your own experience
- Listen for God and for one another
- Respect that others may be at a different place than you

This conversation is about **shared discernment**.

Personal Reflection

What do you hope will be honoured in this process, regardless of the outcome?

 Your Notes:

SECTION 2

Entering the Conversation Well

Faithful discernment often requires a shift in how we approach the conversation.

Four Perspective Shifts

- From urgency → discernment
- From preservation → purpose
- From comparison → curiosity
- From efficiency → relationship

These shifts help create space for prayer, listening, and trust.

Reflection

Which of these perspective shifts feels most difficult right now - for you or your congregation? Why?

 Your Notes:

“Why We’re Here” Reflection

I am willing to explore amalgamation because...

 Your Notes:

Hopes & Hesitations

As you enter this conversation, what feelings are present for you?

(Mixed emotions are normal and welcome.)

 Writing Responses:

Hopes -

Hesitations / Concerns -

SECTION 4

Sharing Our Stories

Why Story Comes First

Before solving problems or discussing structures, we begin with **story**. Stories build relationship.

Stories help others understand:

- who we are
- where we have come from
- what matters most to us

Share – Talk about your experience in your church

Congregational Story Reflection

As you listen to stories (including your own), notice:

- Moments of **joy**
- Experiences of **loss**
- Times of **change**
- Hopes and fears for the future

Your Notes:

 **Your Notes:**

SECTION 5

Understanding Congregational Culture

Congregations often differ in how they respond when things are uncertain or difficult. These differences are **information**, not obstacles.

Reflection: How We Make Decisions

When your congregation faces challenge or uncertainty:

- How are decisions usually made?
- Who is involved?
- What builds trust?
- What creates tension?

 Your Notes:

Worship & Community Life

What feels especially important in your congregation’s worship and community life?

 Writing Responses:

SECTION 6

Discerning Shared Purpose

Looking Beyond Preservation

The guiding question is not: *How do we keep what we have?*
But rather: *What might God be calling into being through us together?*

Purpose Statement Reflection

Complete the sentence:
God may be calling us together so that...

 Your Notes:

Ministry Priorities

As you think about the future, which areas feel most essential?

From Ministry categories in Living Faith Story:

- Administration
- Community Outreach & Social Justice
- Continuing Education
- Denomination & Communities
- Faith Formation & Christian Education
- Leadership
- Pastoral Care
- Self Care
- Worship

Or additionally:

- Children & Youth
- Seniors
- Property / Place
- Other: _____

 Your Notes:

SECTION 7

Exploring Practical Realities

(When the Time Is Right)

A Guiding Principle

Relationship and purpose come before structure.

Governance, finances, and property matter — and they are best explored once trust and shared purpose are forming.

Reflection

As you think about finances, property, and leadership:

- What excites you?
- What feels tender or difficult?
- What questions do you carry?

 Your Notes:

Imagining the Future

Imagine a newspaper headline five years from now:

"Local church celebrates..."

 Your Notes:

SECTION 8

Caring for People Through Change

Discernment processes involve:

- grief and gratitude
- fatigue and hope
- anxiety and anticipation

All of these deserve care.

Reflection

What support do you — or others in your congregation — need during times of transition?

 Your Notes:

A Final Word

"We did this faithfully — even when it was hard."

- trust
- clarity
- respect
- stronger relationships

 Your Notes:

What feels clearer now than when you began?

