

**North Heartland Community Church
and Hope Church KC
Merger FAQ**

First of all, thank you to everyone who took time to attend a “townhall meeting” to share thoughts and ask questions!

This document includes our answers to some of the most frequently asked questions at all seven meetings. We hope this will be helpful as we enter into the final phase of our discernment process.

Decision Process & Timing

Q: The Hope congregation just lost its space at New Mark. Everyone I know seems to be in favor, so why not go ahead and merge now instead of waiting until July 17th?

A: It’s tempting, but we decided not to go that route for several reasons.

- We believe that the significance of this move warrants a time of “listening to God” on the part of both congregations. We believe the affirmation of both congregations *after* this spiritual focus is critical to the success of our potential merger.
- It will take time – weeks – to integrate staff and volunteer teams before the first combined service. Trying to rush that process is not wise.
- Should we choose to merge, the amount of work following that decision will be huge, and everyone who has been working on this process to this point needs a break.

Q: What is the “listening to God” schedule?

A: From June 2nd through June 11th, we are asking everyone in both churches to follow a daily guide which will be mailed, emailed, texted and posted on the merger page of our websites. Here is the specific schedule:

- Thu Jun 2: Daily prayer begins
- Sun Jun 5: Walk/drive your neighborhood and listen to God
- Wed Jun 8: “Listening event” @NHCC building
- Sat Jun 11: Daily prayer ends
- Sun Jun 12: Return discernment card at services

More details are in the guide.

Q: How will the decision to merge (or not) be made?

A: The leadership teams of both churches will meet separately on Tuesday June 14th to review the discernment cards turned in on the previous Sunday. If the collective response of each congregation affirms our conviction that God is leading us to merge, we will move forward. If not, we will not. Each leadership team will follow its normal decision-making process.

Q: Should the merger be approved, what happens next?

A: We see things happening in three phases.

- Phase 1: Integrating staff and front-facing volunteer teams – children’s ministry, arts, hospitality, etc. as well as updating signage, websites, etc. (Wed Jun 14th – Sat Jul 16th). Note that anyone who wants to be part of the new music team will be required to audition on one of two dates, Thursday June 16th or Saturday June 18th. This includes those already serving on the music team of each church.
- Phase 2: Integrating the congregations at large plus behind-the-scenes volunteer teams (Sun Jul 17th – Sun Nov 20th)
 - Sun Jul 17: “Welcome Home” event (first combined service under our new name “Hope Church”)
 - Wed Jul 20: Food Truck Event #1
 - Wed Aug 3: Food Truck Event #2
 - Other events TBD
- Phase 3: “Grand Opening” – major publicity announcing *the new* Hope Church to our community and inviting everyone to join us for the holiday season and new year (Sun Dec 4th – Sun Jan 29th)

Note that on Sunday July 10th each congregation will have a special “closing service” to celebrate and remember what God has done through and among them.

Leadership

Q: At Hope Church KC, the lead pastor is accountable to the elders. At NHCC, the lead pastor is accountable to the Advisory Council. What will the structure be in the new church?

A: Both groups will be combined following the merge and serve as the Advisory Council of the new church through December. At that point, a decision will be made as to the future shape and membership of the council.

Q: What will happen to the staff of each church? Is anyone losing their job?

A. No one is losing their job though there will likely be a shift in responsibilities for some people. We are committed to getting staff members into positions where they are most productive and energized. In addition, because Jason and Rick will share the Sunday speaking duties, that will necessarily reduce the number of speaking opportunities for others. However, we hope to create additional forums that provide a platform for other communications.

Q: The current plan is for Rick and Jason to “change seats” by the end of year three. Is it possible for that timeline to be adjusted (sooner or later)?

A: Yes, absolutely. We’re committed to doing whatever best helps the church accomplish its mission. We adopted that schedule (as well as the preaching transition schedule) because experience has shown it’s better to have a plan than to just “play it by ear” in succession planning. However, any change in this plan would require the consent of the Advisory Council which is responsible for employing the lead pastor of the church.

Family Ministry

Q: Will there be changes to Student Ministry programming?

A: The only change is to the schedule for students who are currently part of Hope Church KC. If the merger completes, opportunities to gather will increase! Monday night meetings will happen every week instead of every other week. Additionally, Student Ministry also meets weekly during the 11:00am Sunday service.

Q: What is the plan for Children's Ministry (Birth – 5th grade) programming?

A: Identical programs will be offered at both Sunday morning services, 9:30am and 11:00am.

Q: What role can students play in this merger?

A: Because students are an important part of the church, we would love to see students from both churches setting the pace for everyone else by welcoming and accepting one another.

Q: Will students still be able to serve in children's ministry on Sunday mornings?

A: Yes! Please! We strongly believe that students and the church as a whole benefit greatly when all generations fully engage. We will be very intentional about getting students plugged into volunteer roles that fit with their interests and the overall opportunities in ministry teams.

Miscellaneous

Q: Can we handle the combined expenses of both churches if some people decide to leave because they don't like the idea?

A: Both churches are currently running in the black (income exceeds expenses) and both have substantial cash reserves. If there is a drop in giving because of departures (or the economy), we're confident that God has *already* provided and *will continue* to provide.

Q: What about branding for the new church?

A: We've hired YellowBox (a company that specializes in church branding) to design our logo as well as indoor and outdoor signage. Some of these elements will likely be installed in phases due to supply and contractor availability. The merged communications team will be reworking the new church website (URL to be determined) and app. We're excited to have a fresh, modern approach to making a good first impression on people!

Q: If the decision is to merge, what is your biggest fear?

Jason: On a church-wide level, it is that someone will "fall through the cracks" and not find their place in the new church. We want everyone to find their place and for it to feel like home for them. God has a purpose and a plan for every person in the new church, and it's our heart to help them discover it. On a more personal level, it is the same level of inadequacy that I've felt over the past 22 years whenever God has asked me to do something "bigger" than I could ask or imagine on my own.

Rick: That I (and other NHCCers) will think of this as "just another step for North Heartland" instead of what it truly is – *the beginning of a new church*. If we don't understand what we're doing, I think we'll be tempted to grumble and complain and maybe even quit because "things are different" and our preferences aren't met. If we merge, it's because God is doing a new thing!