



Updated: February 12, 2026

Q&A About the Proposed Merger

1. What is being proposed?

We are exploring the possibility of **Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church and Faith Presbyterian Church joining together as one congregation**. This would involve shared worship, ministry, leadership, and mission under a unified structure.

The resulting merger would not change the name or identity of Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church; we would be “adopting” the congregation of Faith Presbyterian.

No final decisions have been made. We are currently in a season of prayerful discernment.

2. Why are we considering a merger now?

This opportunity has emerged because both congregations see potential for **new life, shared strength, and expanded mission**. Faith brings a committed group of members and pastoral leadership, and Shepherd of the Hills brings momentum, resources, and ministry capacity. Together, we believe God may be calling us into something new.

3. Is this about saving a struggling church?

Yes and no. Faith has been in a year-long discernment about their future as a worshipping community, and decided to take action before circumstances dictated their next steps. They have a faithful group of members with a heart for mission and ministry, and they had the courage to take a bold step toward a potential merger. This is not a “rescue” or “takeover.” It is a **partnership rooted in shared calling**. Both churches have ministries and gifts worth sharing.

4. Will Shepherd of the Hills change?

Yes and no. Our core identity, theology, worship life, and mission will remain grounded in who we are. At the same time, welcoming new people will naturally shape us in good ways. Change is part of growth, and we will navigate it intentionally and thoughtfully.

5. What will happen to Faith Presbyterian’s property?

The leadership of Shepherd of the Hills and Faith PC will work together to **steward Faith's property** during this transition. The long-term goal is to **determine how to develop a ministry/mission presence in the current Faith property** and, ultimately, sell portions of the property. Any redevelopment would be carried out carefully and in consultation with Mission Presbytery.

At present, we have folks from both churches with experience in commercial real estate, development, building maintenance, and missional work, who are busy evaluating the property and beginning conversations about how to move forward. We have realtors, contractors, and accountants, as well as individuals with experience in missional community engagement, a few pastors, and the Presbytery Board of Trustees.

6. Who will lead the merged church?

The proposed model includes **co-pastors**, with Rev. Leon Bloder and Rev. Amy Myhand serving together. This allows for shared leadership, broader pastoral care, and healthier ministry sustainability. Pastor Leon and Pastor Amy will divide some areas of supervision and oversight and share others. In addition, the Faith PC Session will eventually join the current SHPC Session.

Should the merger proceed, there will be an interim period during which both churches will worship together while remaining separate entities. During this time, Faith PC and SHPC's Sessions will be moderated by Pastor Leon and Pastor Amy separately. If and when the merger takes place, they will alternate moderating the merged Session.

7. How will finances be handled?

Administrative Task Forces from both churches are currently reviewing:

- Budgets (Interim and Merged)
- Assets
- Any liabilities
- Questions about property
- Pledged giving
- Long-term sustainability
- Legal, corporate, and Presbytery requirements

Faith PC's congregation pledged for 2026, knowing that a merger would be a possibility. They would have a budget covering Amy's current salary and their reduced expenses during the interim period from after Easter through the merger. Additionally, they have some undesignated funds and rent income that will continue well after the merger.

Shepherd would operate on our current budget until the merger. Once the merger takes place, there will be a combined budget, with all finances, funds, and resources consolidated.

We anticipate receiving a grant from the Presbytery from one of two funds set aside for church redevelopment, and from the sale of the St. John's Presbyterian Church to fund ministry and

mission in South Austin. These funds would provide a bridge for staff compensation, upkeep of the Faith PC property and congregational life.

Any final proposal for budgets, finances, etc., will be presented to the Sessions of both Faith PC and SHPC for approval.

8. What role does the congregation play?

A central one.

- **You will vote at a congregational meeting on February 22nd on whether or not the congregation intends to merge. This does not mean the merger is a sure thing; it only indicates the congregation's intent to merge once the due diligence, legal, corporate, and Presbytery requirements are met. Ultimately, the Presbytery will have to vote on approving any potential merger.**

This decision belongs to the congregation.

9. What are the timelines for the potential merger?

If the congregation votes with an intent to merge on **February 22nd**, the process moves to the Presbytery meeting on March 6-7. If the Presbytery approves the merger, the target date would be June 1st.

Faith PC will begin worshipping with us after Easter. From Easter through June 1st, we will continue our due diligence and work to resolve any issues that arise. **During this interim period, Faith PC and SHPC would operate as two distinct churches while worshipping together. This would mean:**

- **We would have a legal understanding between us that outlines how we operate.**
- **We will continue to work from two distinct budgets.**
- **There would be two Sessions operating independently but side by side.**
- **The plan is that if the congregation votes to merge and the Presbytery approves, we will continue our due diligence and aim to complete it by the end of May.**

10. What about Staffing?

Faith PC has no staff that they are retaining, except for Rev. Amy Myhand.

Shepherd would need to hire a staff member to assist Cathy with Administrative duties and also take on some communications tasks.

There would also need to be a review of compensation for staff members taking on additional tasks as a result of the merger.

Again, the aforementioned grants would cover staffing expenses until we are able to shoulder them ourselves.

11. Why Now?

Some of you have asked why we need to move quickly through this process.

As noted earlier, Faith PC has been developing a plan for its congregation for over a year. Their work led to this idea, which was presented to our staff's senior leadership several months ago.

Faith PC's longtime accompanist and choir director is retiring after Easter, which makes it extremely difficult for them to worship together, and without the long-term means to hire the staff to make it happen.

To bring this before Presbytery at the March meeting, we have been doing everything we can to ensure the SHPC congregation has as many opportunities as possible to ask questions and raise concerns, but within a shorter timeframe.

The good news is, you can vote for the intent to merge, and know that the work of due diligence, finances, congregational life questions, and much more will continue for some months.

If, at any time after the vote, it becomes clear that a merger is not feasible, the leadership of either Faith PC or SHPC could essentially pull the plug, and the process would end.

12. Questions about Additional Worship Services

Some people have asked, "Will we have two worship services?" A few have asked it more than once, so we'd like to respond.

Pastor Leon, Pastor Rob, and Beth have all responded publicly at our two Town Hall meetings and the recent Q&A session about this issue, so we'll distill what they said into bullet points:

- We will not be adding an additional worship service for the foreseeable future.
- Our Sanctuary is not at capacity on Sundays, and the folks who would be coming from Faith PC to worship regularly would number between 25 and 30 at most. We have significant room to grow.
- With our current worship rotation model, the choir has ample time to prepare and lead the congregation. With a monthly commitment rather than a weekly one, the choir has grown. That increase in participation and in excellence is not sustainable on a weekly basis.