



Proposed Merger of:

Runnymede United Church and Windermere United Church QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Updated April 2

1. What's new? We have now scheduled and are preparing for the upcoming Town Hall meetings (Thursday, April 13th at 7PM Zoom only and Sunday, April 16th at noon - in-person following Coffee Time). Please be sure to check out the dedicated merger webpage for the most recent information and updates including all Q and A's to date (www.runnymedeunited.org).

2. If the merger goes forward, what will the newly configured church be called?

Our Community of Faith name will remain Runnymede United Church. We would have two campuses named Runnymede Campus and Windermere Campus.

3. Will Windermere congregants be comfortable with participating in our key activities, events, processes? How can we best support integration?

We hope so and we will do all we can to make our neighbours feel that they belong here. We also hope that congregants from Windermere will contribute to shaping our events and life at Runnymede! Some Windermere congregants have already come for Sunday Morning. If and when we both vote yes, we will be more intentional in welcoming people from Windermere into our church community. For now, if you meet someone new, introduce yourself and start the conversation! We are encouraging all Runnymede congregants to wear name tags on Sundays to support getting to know all newcomers.

4. What are some things we can learn from Windermere (successful activities, events, fundraising etc.) and what are some things they can learn from us?

We have learned that Windermere has made very effective use of their building for both financial support and as a hub for the community. Windermere has been very successful with an intentional focus on local outreach. Windermere's core team has expressed that they value our stable and growing membership, the availability of Sunday School, Youth and Nursery programs, our vibrancy and energy and key activities such as book and bible studies, community meals, Bible camp to name a few things and how we share a common value for outreach and engagement.

5. What happens if one congregation votes 'yes' and the other votes 'no' in the Congregational votes?



A merger can only take place if both congregations vote 'Yes'. If one congregation votes 'no', then there is no merger. Both congregations would have to assess the reasons for a 'no' vote and decide if it makes sense to try again with a different structure or proposal.

6. What challenges does Runnymede need to manage to make this merger successful if the vote is a yes? (Activities, staff, volunteers ?)

There will be a number of exciting challenges ahead if we agree to merge. First, there are practical governance and financial matters to create the merged church. This will be mostly a Board and Treasurer/Finance process. Second, we need to invite, welcome and engage with the congregants from Windermere to make Runnymede their church home. This is likely the most critical element as it runs the gamut from Sunday Morning to committees to events: each of us needs to ask, how do we invite and engage those from Windermere in my group or event or passion? Third, we need to walk together in looking at the community outreach ministry and making great use of the Windermere campus. We know we can learn much from each other.

7. Some people seem to be excited about the opportunity to merge while others are reticent or saying nothing at all? Why is that?

People handle potential changes in different ways. For some, their comfort level is immediate while others need to ask more questions, get more information or simply think things through before they either comment on that potential change or embrace it. That is why we are making every effort to support congregants in gaining the information they need to better understand the potential merger and its implications; through communications such as our Q and A process (handouts each Sunday and on our website), Town Halls scheduled in April, discussions at Coffee Time and the availability of submitting questions.

8. How close is Windermere, is it walkable? How can disabled congregants at RUC to get to any events at the Windermere campus? Can we carpool?

A two campus Runnymede is something new! It will take some getting used to by all of us. Windermere is walkable from Runnymede United – south to Bloor and then west to Windermere. If you live south of Runnymede United and just east or west, then it is likely a similar distance to Windermere. When planning events, we may now have a choice of location, or we may run events in two locations. We will have to think through how best to use our two campus structure while ensuring ease of access. If carpooling is an answer, we will certainly look into it.



- 9.** What are some of the outreach issues in the Swansea neighbourhood we need to understand as we potentially move forward? How have they been addressed so far by Windermere and what further outreach is needed such as housing issues, food insecurity?

We can look at the work that has been done to date as our best answer before engaging with Windermere and their volunteer community on the biggest needs going forward. Windermere has tackled food security through the food bank at St. Pius. They have tackled housing issues with a massive fund raiser for the people displaced from Swansea Mews. They helped foster the Stone Soup Network which brings people together to tackle local issues. These are just three examples, and we look forward to a new partnership in outreach in the neighbourhood.

- 10.** What is Windermere's underlying motivation to seek a merger with Runnymede? Is it simply because they do not have enough people to continue?

Based on what we have heard in our discussions with Windermere leadership, yes, it was not having enough people to continue. Their decision to seek a merger was not financial. Windermere, like many churches and organizations, suffered a decline in membership and engagement over the pandemic.