

LIVING THE VISION REPORT  
FROM THE JOINT AMALGAMATION COMMITTEE TO  
BELL STREET AND MCLEOD-STEWARTON  
CONGREGATIONS

March 4, 2008

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to describe what an amalgamated “McBest”<sup>1</sup> church might look like so that members can have a clear idea of what they are voting for at the Amalgamation Vote later this spring. Amalgamation provides an opportunity for us to be different from what we are today, to imagine what God is calling us to do. It is an opportunity to look both **Inward** - building up the body of Christ and **Outward** - to the work of ministry and mission. The world is changing so fast and the church has to respond to the changing needs of our world and community. If we continue the status quo – merging two traditional congregations, combining our “stuff”, assets, and needs and then choosing a little of this and a little of that – we are likely to continue the decline of Sunday school, younger families and congregation.

The creation of a new congregation is an opportunity for renewal, the beginning of a new Vision. It will take time to form its own, new personality<sup>2</sup>. It will need time to grow, to become sustainable – both financially and in terms of energy and leadership for living out its vision.

We ask that you read this document carefully and with an open mind. As you read, ask yourself whether the proposed amalgamated church sounds like a place you would like to be part of – one that has something for you. Does this amalgamated church offer more than our current churches do, both to our current church members and to the members of the community that we hope to attract? Consider the alternatives (what will happen if we *don't* take this opportunity).

Read carefully, jot down questions, and plan to come to an “Amalgamation Conversation” meeting in the next few weeks (date to be announced shortly) and ask your questions and learn as much as you can before voting. We hope this document will encourage everyone to enter into a period of prayerful discernment prior to the Amalgamation Vote later this spring.

## 2. The New Vision

We began our amalgamation journey last fall by building together a new vision for the future “McBest”.

"A Christian meeting place of spirit, faith, and community for all, rooted and recognized in Central Ottawa as a place to nurture spirituality and question the values of secular society. All who enter find something meaningful to their lives and experience a loving community in times of celebration, fun, joy and sorrow."

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<sup>1</sup> For those who may have missed the Joint Worship service on Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> this was the creative name for the amalgamated church offered during the “Minute for Amalgamation”. In this report we are using “McBest” as a shorthand reference to McLeod-Stewarton and Bell Street United churches.

<sup>2</sup> Wilderness Tales, from Royal Heights and St. John’s Strawberry Hill United churches, Oct. 2007

### 3. Living-the-Vision: How We Turn A Vision Into New Church Life

Following your approval of this Vision statement in October 2007 the Joint Amalgamation Committee (JAC) mandated all Standing Committees of both churches to begin working together to flesh out how they would “Live the Vision” in their particular area of church life. They were asked to reflect on the three major components of the Vision statement:

- a) *to nurture mature followers of Jesus*, that is Christians who seek to deepen a personal relationship with God and thereby transform themselves and their communities. This component of the Vision speaks of spirit-filled worship engaging our minds, hearts, bodies and voices to strengthen each person's relationship to God and to each other;
- b) *to build community* by strengthening relationships both within the congregation and by connecting to the community outside the church and seeking and growing partnerships with other community and faith organizations. This vision component also speaks of developing a spiritual centre for central Ottawa sponsored by the new amalgamated congregation, a place for nurturing spirituality and encouraging individuals to be open to the experience of God in their everyday life, and
- c) *to demonstrate Christian values* of faithfulness to God, openness, inclusiveness, risk-taking and faithful stewardship throughout the life of the church.

The Joint Committees were also instructed to take into account your feedback to us during the consultation with both congregations last October. Their mandate included identifying the implications of the Vision on space, equipment and staffing requirements. The Joint Standing Committees tasked with this work were: Worship, Christian Development/Faith Formation, Pastoral Care, Mission and Outreach, UCW, Ministry and Personnel and Governance.

Because of the particular importance of the United Church mission in support of Centre 507 in downtown Ottawa, currently accommodated at McLeod-Stewarton, a Living-the-Vision plan for Centre 507 was also prepared. The following section presents the Living-the-Vision Plans of each of these committees and Centre 507.

### 4. Living-The-Vision Plans

#### **4.1 WORSHIP**

##### **a) What Worship Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

The combined congregations have a traditional worship style with occasional non-traditional elements such as slide projections, guitar led hymns, popular music solos, drum accompaniment and some non-traditional anthems and hymns. Combined membership is estimated at approximately 125 members attending Sunday morning worship service. Other elements of the combined service include: approximately 25 choir members; lay scripture readers; a Minute for Mission every other week; a hand bell choir about once a month; periodically, special theme worship services, often with guest speakers; occasional intergenerational services, music focused services or lay led

services; worship is planned by the ministers and the organists with support from Worship Committee.

This predominantly traditional worship style can convey a message that our Christian community is only interested in people who relate to this format.

### **b) Future Vision for Worship**

#### Nurturing Mature Followers of Jesus

Our vision says, "*All who enter find something meaningful to their lives*". Worship will be at the centre of church life taking different forms, both traditional and contemporary and using a variety of elements to touch both heart and head. The Vision for worship includes: family oriented services, lay led services; support, encouragement and training of lay worship leaders and lay readers including encouragement and support to youth to share their gifts in worship; an expanded variety of music in worship and use of different musical instruments; the periodic use of art and drama for variety and inspiration; and some non-traditional services, for example, Taizé services (focusing on prayer and Christian meditation) held at times other than Sunday morning.

#### Building Community

In order to connect to the community Worship Committee proposes to offer from time to time special services geared to the concerns of particular community groups - for example Centre 507 folk (in collaboration with the Centre's Chaplain), or for the women from the Well or a service inviting the volunteers who work in these community organizations.

To raise the profile of the church in the community we propose community hymn sings and concerts; improved visibility in the community through signs, banners or bulletin boards in front of the church building and a new website. There could be a spiritual question or quote posted outside the church to draw the attention of passersby; the church should project a welcoming and lively appearance from the street - imposing wooden doors might be replaced with glass doors for example.

#### Demonstrating Christian Values

To live out the Christian values of our Vision create a 'Welcoming Centre' where visitors can enter, learn about the life of the church, the programs and services offered and feel welcome before going into the sanctuary. Train ushers and greeters to be very intentional in welcoming folks, inviting visitors to "come and sit with me"; be intentional regarding follow-up with visitors; offer a ministry of "hospitality" built on the themes and practices of "Emerging Spirit".<sup>3</sup>

### **c) Immediate Space Requirements for Worship for the Combined Congregation**

The amalgamated congregation would require traditional sanctuary space with seating for approximately 200 people as well as a multi-use room that could serve as a chapel or for other uses; a choir loft for 30; choir room, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, organ, grand piano, hand bells; a wireless microphone and sound system with recording capability; a hearing loop system for the hearing impaired; portable projector and screen setup; and a secure storage. The sanctuary must be fully accessible to all, have an area for people in wheel chairs, accessible washroom nearby, accessible handicap parking. The worship space will integrate as many items as possible from our previous church homes.

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<sup>3</sup> The United Church initiative to attract new members from the 30-45 year old demographic.

#### **d) Future Space Requirements for Worship**

Many of the immediate space and equipment requirements for worship described above (section c) apply to the future vision of worship as well. However, in addition, to support the vision we propose: flexible seating for approximately 200 people in the sanctuary, that is, chairs and space which can be easily adapted for different styles of worship and different numbers of worshipers; the ability to create more intimate areas of worship; space for the choir that does not place choir members behind worship leaders or prevent them from seeing worship activities; a flexible arrangement for the chancel area to permit traditional or alternate placement of pulpit, communion table, lectern, baptismal font etc. yet can be converted easily for concerts, plays or other uses; a pipe organ with movable console, and grand piano; secure storage space; a multi-purpose room that can serve both the choir and be used for meetings during the week ; recording capability for CD/DVD/Ipod and a separate sacred space where members of any faith feel welcome to come to pray or reflect in silence.

#### **e) Leadership Needs for Worship**

From the beginning of our amalgamation talks we have acknowledged that the amalgamation of Bell Street and McLeod-Stewarton churches alone, with no strategy for future growth is unsustainable. Staffing decisions must be driven by a strategy for growth and not from a fear of scarcity of funds.

The emphasis in the Vision on family services, intergenerational services and ministry with youth in order to grow the congregation requires, in addition to a full time minister, a part time Staff Associate to focus on children and youth in year two.

A part-time music director is required to lead and oversee the various types of music; there would be different musical accompaniments or soloists each week or so.

### **4.2 FAITH FORMATION/CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT**

#### **a) What Faith Formation Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

The combined practices for faith formation in Bell Street and McLeod-Stewarton include nursery and Sunday school programs for approximately 17 children and youth. Because of the relatively small numbers, children of various ages are combined in one class. Seasons of the Spirit curriculum resources are used at both churches and teachers rotate. Periodically children are encouraged to share their gifts of music and song in worship and older ones sometimes dramatize scripture or participate in presenting the theme conversation. There is an on-going youth faith development and service program whereby youth volunteer with Habitat for Humanity or on mission/learning trips during the spring school break.

Adult faith education and fellowship programs consist of Bible study, the Arc-M club, the UCW and ACE groups, Advent and Lent study sessions both clergy and lay-led, a congregational book and movie group, a bookmobile program and an on-line Bible study group.

#### **b) Future Vision for Faith Formation**

##### Nurturing Mature Followers of Jesus

Our Vision for the amalgamated church describes a “*place to nurture spirituality and question secular values*”. To live out this part of the vision we propose the development

of a “Spirituality Centre”. A Spirituality Centre consists of a changing “repertoire” of creative programs that transform us through prayer, learning and service in many forms, thus encouraging the exploration, deepening and living of our Faith. Such a Centre offers a range of programs, some clearly Christian based, some not, outside of weekly Sunday worship, that invites Christians and others who may not identify themselves as Christians but who are seeking deeper spiritual meaning in their lives. It is one strategy for growth in a diverse, multi-cultural society.

The development of the Spirituality Centre includes the encouragement of small group ministries. This can be defined as “an intentional gathering of three to twelve people who form around the particular interests of members and commit to working together to live their faith”<sup>4</sup>. Such groups provide opportunities for learning and for exploring ways of faithful living that challenge the secular values of a consumer society. Examples of possible small groups include: Christian meditation, new members, caring for creation, justice advocacy, living simply, Grannies-supporting Grannies, quilting, and liturgical dance groups. The groups would change over time depending on interests, needs and priorities.

To address the faith formation needs of children our vision proposes exploring possible alternative approaches to teaching Sunday school that engages children more actively in learning through a variety of activities. One such approach is the Workshop Rotation model where the same Bible story is repeated over three to four weeks. Each week approaches the story using a different activity - drama, music, art, computer technology etc. (reference Dreams, Hopes and Visions for the Church by Donna Sinclair and Christopher White and the experience of Barrhaven, Cityview and Parkdale UC’s in Ottawa)

#### Building Community

The value of the small group ministries is that they strengthen personal relationships, provide opportunities for members to develop and share their gifts and give everyone a sense of belonging somewhere, thus strengthening the congregation. At the same time the variety of programs can draw in new members from outside.

The existing partnership with Centre 507 might offer opportunities to combine small group interests and ministry to our community – for example developing a Centre 507 choir or a community garden project. In collaboration with other downtown UC churches we could offer mission/learning projects for youth or adults.

#### Demonstrating Christian Values

Faith formation in this church would demonstrate openness and inclusiveness by reaching out to all seekers, self- identified Christians or otherwise through the Spirituality Centre; by striving to make all feel that they belong through inclusive language; by seeking opportunities to honour other cultural traditions; by being sensitive to economic diversity and by seeking to build relationship with clients of Centre 507.

### **c) Immediate Space Requirements for Faith Formation for the Combined Congregation**

Nursery requirements: 1 room, at least 10 feet x 15 feet, with windows, rug, crib, lockable storage cupboard, space and hooks for coats, with open, reachable shelving

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<sup>4</sup> The Big Book on Small Groups, Jeffrey Arnold

for toys and books, space for low table with chairs for seating up to 6 toddlers; adjacent, accessible washroom.

One classroom: to accommodate up to 8 children; with piano, tables and chairs, secure storage cupboard; display wall space, black or white board;

A room dedicated to the needs of teens: the largest segment (8 children) of the amalgamated Sunday school would be age 9-13 yrs. This room would allow for informal seating and have wall coverings that could be easily decorated without concerns regarding paint and surfaces etc.

One lounge; (20' x 20') for up to 20 people; carpeted, near kitchen, with informal, comfortable seating such as sofas and arm chairs; living room lighting, quiet, contemplative atmosphere; wheelchair accessible; access to accessible washrooms. This space could accommodate a Bible study group, UCW meetings, Advent and Lenten study/reflection groups etc.

#### **d) Future Space Requirements for Faith Formation**

Nursery requirements: same as c) above.

Children/youth/adults: One large flexible space room suitable for up to 40 people, 30' x 20' with retractable dividers; adjacent to accessible washrooms, storage space for stacking chairs and tables; secure storage cupboard for teaching supplies, and/or sports equipment such as exercise mats, balls; and/or media equipment (laptop, digital projector and moveable screen); with internet connection; piano or electronic keyboard; wheelchair accessible entrance; preferably near kitchen facilities.

The large format of this flexible space could serve both children and adults - as classroom space when programs call for dramatic movement or dance for example, for exercise programs for seniors, for meeting space for committees or special speaker events; and for fellowship activities such as Arc-M events;

Two smaller classroom/meetings rooms: each to accommodate up to 10 people; but with potential (year 2 or 3) to serve dedicated functions such as art or a computer lab; internet connection in one room; sink for clean-up in one room. The "art room" could also serve creative ministry needs of adults connected to a Centre for Spirituality for example.

A separate small room dedicated to the needs of teens: same as 5.2 b) above but with a computer station added, internet access, DVD player and screen added and adjacent to kitchen or mini-kitchen.

One lounge; same as above.

Staff Associate office space - closed-in office with lockable door and room for desk, computer and sitting area for 3 chairs; etc; internet access, shelving for books and materials, window. (Needed in year 2).

#### **e) Leadership Needs for Faith Formation**

In Year 2 hire a Staff Associate, either one full time or two part-time positions to address both children/youth faith formation programs and the development of a Spirituality Centre. This position should require experience planning, training and coaching leaders for Small Groups.

### 4.3 MISSION AND OUTREACH

#### **a) What Mission and Outreach Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

The combined Mission and Outreach of Bell Street and McLeod-Stewarton supports Centre 507, the Christmas Hamper project, organizing Mission service speakers, the community barbeque as well as partnerships with other organizations (Haitian Community, Cambridge Public School Program, AA etc.) The “Minute for Mission” is read weekly during the service.

#### **b) Future Vision for Mission and Outreach**

##### Nurturing Mature Followers of Jesus

Mission and Outreach would keep the congregation informed of outreach events and activities, provide opportunities for the congregation to become more involved with outreach and hold Outreach services with an educational component after the service. An “outreach suggestion box” would be used to seek input from members for outreach activities both within the community and within the congregation. Mission and Outreach would plan afternoon church outreach activities, with all members of the congregation participating and arrange ecumenical worship services in partnership with other churches.

##### Building Community

Our vision speaks of “*building community and seeking and growing partnerships with other community and faith organizations*”. Mission and Outreach would continue to strengthen its relationship with Centre 507 and would search for other organizations and church communities with an outreach mandate in the downtown area to develop partnerships where possible. Guest speakers from other churches/religions/organizations would be invited to speak to provide insight into their spirituality or raise awareness for their cause. Individuals and groups with whom the church is already in partnership would be encouraged to join in Sunday worship.

##### Demonstrating Christian Values

Mission and Outreach would demonstrate acts of kindness within the community (an afternoon of free car washes, baking bread & giving it to people before church, picking up litter in the neighbourhood, lemonade stand after church) in addition to advocacy work to raise the Christian voice within the community, leading by example, a warm and welcoming church environment.

#### **c) Immediate Space Requirements for Mission & Outreach for the Combined Congregation** (Centre 507 requirements listed separately)

Meeting space for eight people three times a year; Christmas Hamper Project – during mid-December requires secure space for 10 days to pack 80 hampers and store 160 hampers for two days (200 sq ft); Emergency Food Centre - distribution room, storage/preparation room, 2 weekday parking spots; Church Council on Justice and Corrections – 1 board room, 4 offices, 2 weekday parking spots.

#### **d) Future Space Requirements for Mission and Outreach**

Future space requirements, in addition to those listed for the combined congregations would include a kitchen 15x30 for cooking classes and dining area for 60 for “Out of the Cold Suppers” etc.



#### **e) Leadership Needs for Mission and Outreach**

In the second year the chaplain position at Centre 507 would be full time. The new chaplain would relate easily to street people and have a strong sense of social justice.

### **4.4 PASTORAL CARE**

#### **a) What Pastoral Care Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

Visits in person and by phone are made regularly. Team members assist with services at nursing homes in the west end monthly. Greeting cards are sent for special celebrations (birthdays over 80 and anniversaries over 50). Team members are encouraged to take the Pastoral Care training course. The tape ministry would keep contact with shut-in congregation members. Annual visits are made to shut-ins and elderly members.

#### **b) Future Vision for Pastoral Care**

Our vision says – *“All who enter ...will experience a loving community in times of celebration, fun, joy and sorrow.”* The Pastoral Care committee would develop privacy and confidentiality policies. Committee members would receive training in pastoral care. Members would provide prayer and spiritual support. A system of documentation of calls and visits would be devised. Needs of people visited would be assessed by committee members and reported back to organizer or minister. Arrangements would be made to drive people to appointments, with a team member acting as coordinator if necessary. A Resource book would be used to connect people with needed services in the community. Special occasions would be acknowledged with cards. The team members would assist the minister in providing communion to individuals and groups in nursing homes. The committee would report as required by the governance structure.

#### **c) Immediate Space Requirements for Pastoral Care for the Combined Congregation**

Meeting space once or twice a year for 14 people.

#### **d) Future Space Requirements for Pastoral Care**

Meeting space for 14 people 3 or 4 times a year or as needed.

#### **e) Leadership Needs for Pastoral Care**

The new amalgamated congregation will need to set priorities and timing on the various staffing needs identified in this report. Pastoral Care can envision a need for a parish nurse in year 2/3. The committee would support and assist the activities of a Parish nurse. Administrative staff support would be required in the preparation of lists of those requiring pastoral care.

### **4.5 UCW**

#### **a) What UCW Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

The combined UCW meets regularly and includes worship at all meetings. The group helps with congregational events and fellowship following services and gatherings. They undertake service projects such as Centre 507 dinners at Thanksgiving and Christmas, sandwich making, Palm Sunday egg collection for the food bank, pie making for the Christmas Exchange, Turkey dinner for the Canadian Council of the Blind.

## **b) Future Vision for UCW**

### Nurturing Mature Followers of Jesus

Worship at every meeting and encouragement of members to attend regular church bible study.

### Building Community

Our vision says, *"All who enter ...experience a loving community in times of celebration, fun, joy and sorrow."* To live out this vision the UCW proposes to: invite newcomers and others to attend and share their ideas, skills and experiences; sponsor a monthly senior's group (program and lunch) open to all seniors in the community. Such a program would offer speakers on a variety of topics (breast cancer, home security, internet/banking/credit card security) as well as services such as flu shots and opportunities to purchase fair trade items; implement a "Girls Night Out" for women to get out for an evening of laughter and fun and to get to know each other. Church has to be fun as well as a place to worship and work on committees.

### Demonstrating Christian Values

The UCW would support church leaders and staff. The UCW would support outreach projects of the church, the UCW and the community. They would host fellowship events, welcome others to be a part of any church group and make people feel that they have a place in the church. A small bus or van to pick up people for church, meetings and social functions would help everyone feel truly welcome and wanted. The UCW could collaborate with Pastoral Care to create a Caring Casseroles program to prepare a meal for someone in need (illness, death or just a tough time) when called upon.

## **c) Immediate Space Requirements for UCW for the Combined Congregation**

All areas need to be accessible and near washrooms. Meeting space once monthly for approximately 20 women with access to kitchen, comfortable area for worship and meeting, good lighting, table and chairs, podium, hall and kitchen facilities (stoves, refrigerators, freezer, dishwasher, microwave, 3 sinks, cupboard and counter space for equipment, dishes, silver ware, linens, etc.) Storage space - small room and cupboard for supplies

## **d) Future Space Requirements for UCW**

Same as for combined congregations.

## **e) Leadership Needs for UCW**

The UCW leader and members will support ministry staff, the church administrator and custodian. The UCW hopes for recognition from ministry staff and the congregation. Amalgamation will require a plan for changes in UCW leadership and the sharing of resources.

## **4.6 MINISTRY AND PERSONNEL**

### **a) What Ministry and Personnel Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

The combined Ministry and Personnel (M & P) Committees of Bell Street and McLeod-Stewarton will provide support to the Staff of the new church and consult with them as required. M & P will meet at least 4 times a year. The committee is open to receiving input and concerns from the congregation and will work with staff to resolve them.

One difference in the work of the committees is that the Bell Street committee is responsible for preparing job descriptions and searching for candidates for the Organist, Custodian, and Administrator positions. At McLeod-Stewarton these responsibilities lie with the committee most closely aligned with the position i.e. Organist – Music and Arts Committee, Custodian – Property Committee, Church Secretary – Administration and Finance Committee. This difference should be addressed in the governance plans for the new congregation.

**b) Ministry and Personnel Vision**

Nurturing Mature Followers of Jesus

The committee will support Pastoral Charge staff in their role of nurturing mature followers of Jesus.

Building Community

To ensure community is maintained in the congregation the M&P Committee will let the congregation know of the role of the committee and that they should bring their concerns to them.

Demonstrating Christian Values

The M&P Committee will demonstrate Christian values by caring for the staff by consulting with them and supporting them.

**c) Immediate Space Requirements for Ministry and Personnel**

Adequate working spaces for staff (Minister's office, Administrators office, Custodian supplies area, Organist choir room) and a sound proof, private room with space for 5 chairs for M & P committee to meet

**d) Future Space Requirements for Ministry and Personnel**

Same as c, above, with the addition of adequate working space for Staff Associate in year two.

**e) Leadership needs Ministry and Personnel**

It is important to all concerned that the Minister(s) work well with all the staff of the pastoral charge.

**4.7 GOVERNANCE**

**a) What Governance Looks Like When We Combine Our Current Practices**

The current governance models that are being used by the Bell Street (Unified Board Model) and McLeod-Stewarton (Sessions/Stewards Model) congregations are large and unwieldy. Both depend on many individuals being involved the operations of the governance structure, and harkens back to an era when attendance was much greater.

**b) Future Vision for Governance**

The "Congregation Organization Handbook" describes five organizational models that a congregation may wish to consider. They are: the Session/Stewards Model, the Unified Board Model, the Church Council Model, the Mission Team Model and a Streamlined Board Model.

The future "McBest" congregation will need to look at the various governance models and decide which one best meets the needs and vision of the congregation. The

"Streamlined" model may be the optimum model because it appears to be the least taxing on people resources. As it is open to creativity, it would allow members to participate and be active in areas that they are drawn to.

### **c) Immediate Space Requirements for Governance for the Combined Congregation**

Meeting room large enough to hold up to 40 people on comfortable chairs. Two large tables, projector and screen, whiteboard and flipchart. Room must be accessible to all with accessible washroom nearby. It would be useful to have a number of smaller spaces/rooms nearby for committee meetings. Storage space required for minutes and committees as well as secure, archival storage. Hearing assistance devices are desirable. Mailboxes.

### **d) Future Space Requirements for Governance**

Same as combined congregations.

### **e) Leadership Needs for Governance**

Two areas of difference between the two congregations, related to governance are: the current role of elders and the responsibility for preparing job descriptions and searching for candidates for various staff positions. These differences need to be resolved for the amalgamated congregation.

## **4.8 CENTRE 507**

### **a) Current Operations and Space Assignment in Centre 507**

Drop-in program: about 150 people per day drop into the upstairs "living-room" where they can get a hot soup and coffee, visit with others, use three computers and participate in ongoing programs.

Staff work in centre from 9-9 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday; 9-5 Tuesday, Friday; and 11-4 on Sunday; Centre 507 is open to the community during the following times:

Monday:	12-3:30 and 5:30-9
Tuesday:	12-3:30
Wednesday:	12-3:30 and 5:30-9
Thursday:	12-3:30 and 5:30-9
Friday:	12-3:30
Sunday:	1-4

The **main drop-in room** is 37 x 32 feet accommodating up 100 persons, 3 computer stations, a coffee station, various tables and chairs and groupings of sofas. At the busiest times at the Centre the current size of this room is inadequate in that the Centre's clients, many suffering from health, addiction and mental health problems, need appropriate personal space in order to avoid conflict.

There is **no private room** currently available for one-on-one meetings with clients or for health services to clients when the public health nurse attends. The nurse currently treats clients in a storage room.

Three full-time staff share one room 11 by 15 feet as **office space**. This room also operates as the Centre's main staff meeting room. All staff, up to 9 persons including seven full-time staff, the chaplain and occasional student interns, gather here at the end of each day for a check-in meeting. This space is inadequate for such meetings given that the room also contains a desk, photocopier and shelving.

An additional 4 staff share **another office** 11 x 9 feet. Three of the staff work the majority of their time outside of the centre, however all programs attached to these workers (Street Outreach, Rooming House Support, and Life Skills Management) require substantial storage for supplies. In addition to 2 desks, this small office space is lined with shelving that does not nearly meet the storage needs of these three programs. The extreme lack of space in this office poses an extreme safety risk to staff as there is no clear exit should a participant become aggressive.

The Centre's **manager has an office** 11 by 10 feet, with desk, filing and storage cabinets, etc. This is cozy but adequate space for one person.

**The kitchen**, where a light lunch is prepared, is 11 by 9 feet and inadequate to support food preparation; very limited counter, fridge and washing up space; no storage space. The cook's position, presently a skills development position, is filled by a client under supervision however when an additional person is in the kitchen, the space is very cramped and has proven a source of anxiety and discomfort for both participants and staff.

**Storage space is an ongoing challenge** for the Centre. Supplies are currently stored in a storage room 10 by 11 feet, containing two refrigerators, plus space underneath the old stage, (very difficult to access and to clean – health hazard with mice droppings littering the space) and cupboards along the west wall of the Drop-in room which serve as a dry/canned goods pantry and area for clothing donation.

There are **two washrooms** which frequently need repair due to high use; electrical capacity is more than sufficient but the location of wires and outlets is all in one area causing "tripping" of the current when multiple electrical equipment is used simultaneously; **current wiring also inhibits** the use of air conditioners which required the drop-in to close four times in 2007 because of overheating. (Temperatures in the summer of 2007 did reach extremes that should have seen the centre close more than four times however, staff on site opted to remain open to continue support to participants).

Although there is a wheel chair ramp from the street to the main door to the Centre used by clients, the upstairs Drop-in is **only accessible by stairs**. Increasingly an aging client population faces mobility issues and stairs are a challenge for some.

Life Skills Management (LSM) Program: Life skills are identifiable and teachable behaviours that enable a person to more successfully meet personal basic needs and deal with mental, emotional and physical challenges. Through life skills programming, participants are given opportunities to learn and grow in their ability to problem-solve and make healthy decisions leading to positive outcomes. Learning life skills helps participants to see themselves as being able to contribute to their community. It builds self-esteem and a desire to reach for a brighter future. Current funding from the federal government expires in 2009 but Centre staff and the Board of Directors view this

program as very high priority and are will seek continuing funding while incorporating life skills programming into all aspects of the Centre's work.

Some LSM activities and special occasions for clients such as the annual Thanksgiving diner are currently carried out in the **basement kitchen and dining hall of the church**, two floors below the Drop-in. In addition, LSM staff use the **kindergarten room**, one floor below the Drop-in, for small or private meetings with clients approximately 3 to 4 times a. The one full-time LSM staff person shares one office with three other Centre staff.

Although the Centre could not operate the LSM program without access to this kitchen and the kindergarten room, this arrangement, not covered by the contract between the church and the Centre, **raises supervision, security and liability issues for both the Centre and the church**. Storage space for the food, materials and supplies for the LSM program is inadequate.

Street Outreach Program: two staff people seek out individuals living rough on the street to offer them support, referral and advocacy as well as bringing them sandwiches and other food stuffs, warm clothing in the winter, and liquids in the heat of summer. People living on the street often have very poor health and suffer with very treatable ailments, but due to their living conditions, mental health and/or issues of severe addiction do not readily seek help. The Street Outreach team endeavours to ensure that these individuals are receiving some level of care rather than none at all.

Materials and supplies for this program include blankets, sleeping bags, boots, shoes, coats, hats, gloves, scarves, thermal underwear, socks, water, juice, granola bars, fruit cups, etc...all of which requires a substantial amount of space to store. The current **storage space** available in the Centre is inadequate.

Rooming House Support Program: This program started in 2008 and consists of 1 staff person whose role is to connect with and support clients living in rooming houses in order to improve the personal living conditions of individuals through life skills programming, advocacy, and referral. This program is a 15 month pilot project in partnership with The Well, a drop in for women, and funded by the Federal Government. There **isn't any space** currently available for the materials and supplies for this program.

## **b) Future Space Requirements to address current constraints**

Drop-in space: An additional 500sq feet would be desirable as it would better meet the needs of an ever growing participant group and would lower the risk of conflict due to crowding.

3 new office spaces: 10 x 12 feet to accommodate staff and much of the supplies for each of the current centre programs; LSM, Outreach and Rooming House Support.

Two Private multi-use meeting rooms: 8 x 8 feet for small, LSM and one-on-one meetings or for use by public health nurse

Office meeting room (Board room), 15 x 30 feet for staff meetings and meetings of the Board

Kitchen to support new Food Program, 12 by 30 feet, beside drop-in room, with appropriate food preparation, cooking, refrigeration, storage and washing space. An expanded food program would require hiring a trained cook.

Two additional washrooms and two showers or laundry facilities, near drop-in room. It would be desirable to add two showers or laundry facilities for use of clients who frequently have limited access to shower/laundry facilities.

Elevator to drop-in level

Storage space: additional 20 x 20 feet secure, storage space

### **c) Location of Centre 507**

Could the Centre operate at the Bell Street site, Dominion-Chalmers United church, or elsewhere in the central core? The following comments are the views of the current Manager of Centre 507 and the Chair of the Board.

- The present location at 507 Bank St. or elsewhere within a 4-5 block radius is preferable. Moving further downtown could result in redundancies with other support programs operating in the same or nearby locations. In particular locating at Dominion-Chalmers United church would risk safety issues for the Women's Shelter located one block from that location.
- Moving to Bell Street's site could be a possibility although coordination would be required with the program at St. Luke's and other Open Door programs.
- Locating to the Chinese church building at 600 Bank St. south of the Queensway would be feasible, if it became available.
- Co-locating with the Emergency Food Cupboard, currently in the basement of McLeod-Stewarton is advantageous to both programs because of a partly shared client population and for security reasons.

### **Conclusion**

We hope this document has helped to paint a picture of what McBest could look like when we try to live out the Vision. The Joint Amalgamation Committee is planning a meeting of both congregations, a date to be announced in the next few weeks, to give everyone an opportunity to respond to this vision.