

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ'S)

Why merge?

It all began with a question...could we be better together than working separately? Could we do more for the kingdom in our area by combining the two churches into one? Upon landing a yes to these questions, God has revealed even deeper ways that He is at work in this venture by revealing how the combination of the two churches really is a complimentary work. Both elder boards believe that the two of us are better together and that this is about being obedient to God's clear leading. Coming together as one church would be maximizing the best of both congregations toward greater kingdom impact.

What would this merger mean between Water's Edge and Bethel?

Like a marriage, two churches would become one. We would become one congregation, one church, with one vision. The new church would work toward forming a new vision for the future together.

What will the merger cost? Can we afford it?

The merger has cost nothing to this point other than a huge investment in time. By completing this process there would be some costs such as signage, branding and facility upgrades. If approved, our analysis of the go-forward costs as a merged church puts us in a much-improved financial position. Neither church is entering this merger with debt. The operating costs would be reduced over \$100,000 per year by eliminating operating costs of having two campuses while providing for having two pastors and an increase in our missions spending. We would add a modular building to provide additional space for children and students. The cost of this building will be covered by Bethel's campus development fund which has been and continues to be funded by donor designated gifts. Our leadership believes God has been preparing us for this time and together we will be better prepared for what He is intending our church to accomplish.

Would the name change?

Yes. We have been and will continue to pray for a new name. A new name will emerge for this new work that God is doing with the combination of these two fellowships.

Where would the new church be located?

The new church would be located at the present campus of Bethel at 25335 Fulshear Gaston Rd. The Lord graciously provided this property to Bethel for His kingdom work and we would continue in this new effort. In 2014, this young church dared to trust God to provide a location for a church without incurring any debt and God supplied over and above the needed funds. In the construction phase, the church once again saw God provide funding for the entire project.

How would this merger impact our church governance structure?

Both churches operate with an elder governance and this would be our leadership structure moving forward. The current eldership of both churches would make up the elder board of the new church.

What about the pastors?

We have an incredible opportunity to be led by two experienced pastors who have launched their respective churches following similar visions and have established themselves in this community. Both pastors would serve in a full-time capacity and in specific roles that fit their unique passions, gifts and abilities. Paul Cockrell would serve as the Lead Pastor of this new church. Randy Beck (title still TBD) would serve with a focus around mission and ministry, a broad share of pastoral counseling, and a portion of preaching. Both men are excited about how God will leverage the previous work of both churches to identify where and how we can better serve Him in reaching the community around us.

What about other staff positions?

Matt Schroeder will continue in his role as Worship Leader. Jill Buczkowski will continue in her role as full-time Admin Assistant. Holly Pruitt will continue in her role as part-time Admin Assistant. Eric Newsome will continue in his role as Student Ministry Coordinator. His role may be modified to better fit within the broader scope of the new Student Ministry program. Alex Slayton has been extended an invitation to join the Worship Team. Further staffing will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

What would it look like with the ministries of both churches combined?

Both churches have similar ministries, and all will be evaluated to determine the best steps to take moving forward. Staff and ministry leaders from both churches have been, and will continue to be, spending time together. The leaders will be strategizing how to have the greatest impact in each ministry to determine the best way to move ahead together.

What would Sunday morning look like?

We would quickly adjust to a two-service format on Sunday morning to ensure that we would have the needed space for worship, children, and student programming. Both churches have very similar styles of worship and would allow for even greater strength on Sunday morning when together. (Times TBD).

What about Missional Communities?

Missional Communities have been a strength within Bethel since the beginning, and we would continue a Missional Community format as a vehicle for authentic community and connection in the new work. There are decisions yet to be made in integrating Small Groups from Water's Edge and the Missional Communities from Bethel.

What happens if the congregations vote "yes" on the merger?

The voting process is unique for each church. Water's Edge by-laws require a vote of two-thirds approval of covenant members. Bethel will ask their congregation for a vote of at least two-thirds affirmation on the merger, although not required by their constitution. If the merger is approved in both churches then an exciting path moves forward for both congregations.

What happens if the congregations vote "no" on the merger?

Should the vote of approval at Water's Edge or the vote of affirmation at Bethel not return "yes", then the leadership at both churches would receive this as God's sign of not pursuing the merger. Both churches would remain two separate churches and continue in the ministry God has given them to accomplish.

What is the timeline for this merger?

Confident in God's affirmation of this merger, the elder boards of both churches have chosen an aggressive timeline:

March 3 - Simultaneous announcements at both churches

March 6 – Simultaneous Town Halls at 7pm at both church locations (childcare not available)

March 10 – Time of prayer during worship

March 17 – Time of prayer during worship

March 17 – Combined Town Hall for both churches together at 3pm at Bethel (childcare will be available)

March 24 - Votes of approval and affirmation

April 21 - (Easter) If approved, first combined worship service as one church

Between the votes of approval/affirmation (March 24) and our first combined worship service as one church (April 21) we will be intentionally remembering, honoring and celebrating the history of what the Lord has done in both churches leading up to this merger.

What should I do now?

Pray for hearts completely open to God's plan rather than our own preferences.

Ask questions and seek answers for any thoughts or concerns you may have, and avoid divisive conversations that might hinder God's plan for His church.

Pray for the leadership of both churches as we work on details and decisions necessary to facilitate a merger of two bodies into one, to the glory of God.

Pray that God would prepare the fields for a future harvest.

Ask God to show you where He will use you in the body of Christ. We need you, and God has gifted you in a unique way to serve the body.

We encourage you to contact a pastor or an elder with any questions or concerns you may have:

Water's Edge

Randy Beck (832) 244-8747

Trey Landers (979) 574-6511

Bethel

Paul Cockrell (281) 606-0089

David Bateman (281) 389-3154

Randy Dutton (832) 723-1080

Kevin Duty (832) 309-7518