

October 12, 2022

Dear Elim and Mill City Members,

We are writing to you with an adoption merger update. As you know our leadership teams have performed an intentional feasibility study over the last month. The pastors met to discuss our mission, theology and ministry philosophy alignment. We also had three teams focused on three areas:

- Community Life and Programming
- Community Partnerships
- Building and Assets

The Feasibility Phase can be described as follows: Due diligence to evaluate the compatibility of the two congregations and name the opportunities and challenges. Then determine from reports if the potential opportunities outweigh the potential challenges and decide to move forward into the discernment phase.

After multiple meetings, and writing and reviewing detailed reports, we are excited to share that on October 5th the leadership teams of both churches voted unanimously that the merger is feasible and to move on to the discernment phase!

A summary of the results of the Feasibility Phase will be shared with you next week after we have time to complete the final draft. There are still many questions that need to be answered in this time of discernment, but we are in agreement that the potential opportunities outweigh the potential challenges of the adoption merger.

Now that we believe this merger is feasible, we must go deeper into the question, “Is this what God is inviting our churches to do?”

The Discernment Phase can be described as follows: Time spent alone in prayer, together as individual churches and both churches together to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us toward or away from an adoption merger.

During this phase here is how we invite you to participate:

- Mark your calendar for opportunities to join in! Spending time together is an important part of discernment - see the list below.
- Read through the feasibility reports and the updated Question and Response document we will send out in the next few weeks.
- Commit to spend time on your own in prayer listening on behalf of our communities. We invite you to reach out to your leadership team if you feel led to share anything from your time of prayer.

Thank you for your participation and prayers up to this point. Please review the list of ways you can join in: [Better Together Calendar](#)

The discernment phase will last until November 16th. Then the two leadership teams will evaluate our progress and share an update with our communities.

Sincerely,

The Mill City Church and Elim Church Pastors and Leadership Teams

Pastor Stephanie O'Brien
Pastor Aashish Baskaran
Pastor Donna Johnson
Cathy Bergland
Raymond Blackledge
John Dunne
Larry Johnson
Kirsten Pratt
Laura Rescorla
Simon Zeng

Pastor Paul Olson
Pastor Becky Hanson
Leslie Smith
Matt Hernick
Suzanne Dahl
Brian Turnquist
Harley Schreck
Heather Carlson
Troy Lubbers

REVIEW OF ADOPTION MERGER PHASES:

Sept 9th, 2022 - [Adoption Merger exploration letter](#) shared with both congregations.

Phase 1 - Feasibility Exploration (September) - COMPLETE

Exploration of the history and context of EC/MCC by the leadership teams of both churches. Exploration will determine the impact upon the areas of community life, membership, outward mission and ministry partnerships, worship, teaching, spiritual formation, assets and human resources.

Phase 2 - Discernment Phase (October - November 16th)

Results of feasibility study shared with both congregations. Your participation in offering feedback, questions and discernment will be important and welcomed. Both groups will determine if a congregational vote is necessary to proceed.

Phase 3 - Congregational Decisions (If discernment leads towards the adoption merger - November/December)

Next steps are shared with both communities based on initial prayer and if decided by the leadership teams, a yes/no vote would take place at each church.

Phase 4 - Joining as one.

Adoption of Elim Church including all members and assets into Mill City Church.

