

MERGER CONSIDERATIONS

The following are topics that should be discussed during merger conversations. The purpose of these conversations is to make known, or expose, any differences that exist between the churches in advance of a merger.

Doctrine

- Is there alignment between the two churches on doctrinal and social issues?

Culture

- Every church has a culture—attitudes they want adopted, values they want championed, beliefs they want instilled, and behaviors they want reproduced.
- While it's possible to build on strengths and adopt best practices from both churches, one culture will and should overtake the other if it's truly going to become one church. Is the culture of each church similar or does one need to “wash over” the other one? How is that going to happen?

Staffing

- If both churches have a senior pastor, what will happen to the senior pastor of the joining church?
- What will the new staff structure of the post-merger church look like?
- Are the pay and benefit structures comparable between the two churches?
- What severance packages need to be built for staff that may not have a job as a result of the merger?

Governance

- How similar are the two churches' form of church governance?
- What will happen to the boards and lay committees at each church?
- Are the churches staff led or board led?
- What does the congregation vote on?
- Is each church a denominational church or non-denominational church?

Budget

- How does each church approach budgeting?
- What is the asset, cash and debt position of each church?

Ministries

- Are the ministries of each church similar? Which will be replicated at both locations and which ones won't? Why?
- What ministries are considered “untouchable” at each church and why?
- What ministry strengths and best practices at each individual church need to be adopted and built on after the merger?
- What will happen to missionaries and other ministries that are supported by the two churches?

Preaching

- Who will be the primary communicator of this new church after the two churches merge to become one?
- Will the teaching be the same or different on each campus or location of this new church after the merger?
- Will you deliver teaching in the weekend services live or by video?

Leading the Congregation

- What will the communication plan be at each church through the process? What audiences need what communication and from whom?
- How will the senior pastor and senior leadership team of the leading church build trust with the congregation of the joining church?

Vote

- How will this decision to merge actually be made and who ultimately makes the decision?
- What do the by-laws of each individual church require?
- If a vote needs to take place by each congregation, how will you conduct the vote? What is the lowest percentage of a positive vote that needs to happen at each church for the merger to take place?

Launch

- Once the merger is voted on, how will you launch and “grand open” this newly merged church? How will you market to and let the community know about this new grand opening?
- Will one church adopt new signage and branding? Will both churches go through a re-branding to a new brand that each church will adopt?
- Do you have any plans to shut down one of the church buildings, with a desire to renovate or up-fit technologically for re-opening as a second location?

Looking to find clarity around the critical components of a church merger? [Start here.](#)