

**Red Deer Lake United Church
Community Engagement Scan Fall 2022
Summary Findings and Recommended Next Steps**

INTRODUCTION:

Red Deer Lake United Church Council has initiated planning for the future. Changes in congregational participation emerging in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with significant new urban growth as the City of Calgary builds out neighbourhoods across Highway 22X, are bringing with them a need for renewed strategic thinking. Meanwhile, the Red Deer Lake facility remains well-located and is relatively new with space that can be deployed in various ways.

Working with Chinook Winds Region, the Joel Den Haan Consulting Group (JDHCG) has undertaken initial community engagement research to provide updated information for Red Deer Lake leadership. Using approaches informed by Asset-Based Community Development, JDHCG has considered current strengths, assets within the community context, emerging opportunities and gaps around the church. Research into social infrastructure as well as the planning and regulatory environment has been supplemented by selected individual consultations with area experts and resource representatives.

Initial results of these investigations are offered for consideration below. The work is not yet complete-choices and initiatives from the Red Deer Lake congregation will be necessary in order to chart and implement a course forward. However the consultations and research conducted to date have identified some clear opportunities, and we will offer recommendations on how to live into these, further below. To begin, however, it may be helpful to consider the spiritual, philosophical, and methodological basis for this work.

1. Basic Principles

Rev. Mark Tremblay at Knox Presbyterian Church in Calgary has led the way in considering community based ministry planning in his area of the city (37 St. SW) over the past five years, as Knox Presbyterian engages significant change in its neighbourhood and its participation base. Rev. Tremblay has distilled some basic theological principles that can inform an asset-based approach to spirituality intimately embedded in local communities. Here is what Rev. Tremblay writes:

“There are some guiding principles that need to be handed on to be remembered. These principles have animated our ministries, and if remembered and followed will continue to help Knox discern its way forward. From these have flowed many good things and can help discern how to choose blessing and life.

*1. The spirit is part of everything we do. it is both the source and animating breath of all of our actions. **We are spiritual beings.***

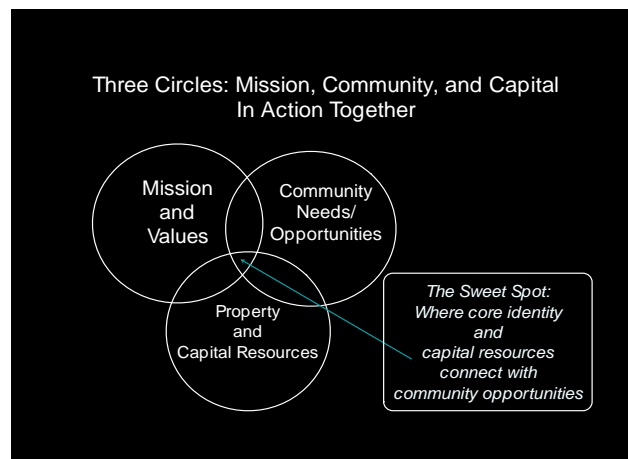
*2. Life in and discernment of the spirit happens in four relationships: Our relationship with ourselves. Our relationship with our community. Our relationship with our environment. Our relationship with the divine. **We do nothing alone.***

3. *Our theology does not define us, it describes and defines the kind of relationships we have and seek. Seeking to live into Luke’s radical social vision of inclusion and Matthew’s discipleship model of seeking and helping the “least of these” in our community, those who are isolated and alone, we seek to co-create safe, inclusive spaces in order to know others and to be known by others. **We are defined by our relationships.***

4. *Community Engagement is the spiritual practice, the instrument, that enables us to remember and celebrate that we are spiritual beings. Transformation comes through grace as we learn about and grow into our four relationships. Our ministry is not to discover what is lacking and offer to supply it, our calling is to discover who is missing and to invite them into relationship. **We cannot grow individually if we are not growing together.***

2. **Methodology for Capital Planning:**

We are not seeking to disrupt ministry already in place, or impact the Sunday Morning experience. Rather, what we are aiming to do is point out directions to build out impact for community needs and opportunities using existing capacities, all aligned with the mission and values of Red Deer Lake United Church. Here’s a way to envision our approach:



3. **RDLUC Ministry and Property Assets:**

- Several years' hard work has yielded clarity on purpose, Affirming values, and consistent branding for the ministry at Red Deer Lake United Church.
- The church facility is comparatively new and well maintained, with underutilized capacity designed in at inception, allowing flexibility.
- Capacity for alternate uses is available- a large section of the lower level is not fully developed, and there are a range of meeting rooms supported by the high-quality kitchen and multipurpose boardroom.

4. **Planning and Regulatory Context:**

- City of Calgary Planning Context: The City’s Providence Area Structure Plan remains the guiding policy document. Within this ASP, Alpine Park development is moving ahead at a significant

pace north of Highway 22x and west of Tsu'ú T'ina Trail.

-Completion of Tsu'ú T'ina Trail access means that original City of Calgary development plans are now proceeding as we had envisioned back in 2004-2005.

-County of Foothills Planning Context: the RDLUC property will remain part of Foothills County for the foreseeable future and will not be annexed; County priorities focus on preservation and enhancement of rural residential context but there is a recognized need for community services and supports along the south edge of the City of Calgary. RDLUC proximity to area schools is the key determining factor informing appropriate usages of church space and/ or lands. Multi-residential development on the site is not in scope at this time due to cost and complexity of servicing (water in particular).

-Tax and charitable compliance mitigates in favour of a non-market or below-market rental structure; some usages may require County of Foothills approval (which we can obtain).



5. **Pathways toward enhanced facility efficiency and revenue:**

In light of the above factors our consultations moved in the direction of agency contacts and services aimed at children and family supports, as well as support to New Canadians. We have not investigated community services in the areas of addictions, seniors and special needs care, or mental health treatment because the RDLUC location is not suitable (see Section 8 below).



6. **Community Engagement Process:**

We have used individual contact conversations to gain the best sense of what community agencies and groups are seeing and hearing about the Red Deer Lake United Church context. The approach has involved structured discussion to identify contact groups and their primary services, and then clarify assets, opportunities, and gaps as those agency representatives see them. Our philosophy is guided by the simple rubric, "We Don't Know What We Don't Know, So Let's Find Out."

The contribution of Chinook Winds Intern Anndrea Vogt, a fourth-year nursing student at

University of Alberta should be acknowledged at this point. Anndrea facilitated a range of agency contacts and individual consultations, and has detailed notes available from these conversations for review.



7. Community Engagement Contacts:

We have held conversations with the following organization representatives:




- City of Calgary Ward 13 Planning Liaison
- Foothills County Senior Planner
- City of Calgary Acadia/ Fairview Social Worker
- Foothills County Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)
- Trellis Family and Youth Support Services
- Carya Society of Calgary
- Simon House Recovery Centre, Calgary
- McMan Youth Family and Community Resource Network, Okotoks




8. Summary of Key Findings and Trends

- Early consultations indicated that the location of Red Deer Lake United Church, notably its proximity to schools and children’s facilities, would limit ability to accommodate certain types of programming. Addictions and mental health treatment programs and partnerships, although needed in the area, would face challenges for regulatory approval and implementation.
- However, there are a range of other community support initiatives that could yield partnership relationships and enhanced community impact from the church location.
- A summary of key findings from community contacts is reported below in table form:

Name of Community Contact	Strengths/Assets of	Opportunities for	Gaps in
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	Contact	Community	Community
 <p>Carya Society of Calgary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Strong families and communities for generations' - Programs for youth, young adults, young families, and older adults (<u>all stages of life</u>) - Language counselling - Numerous hubs and service locations throughout city - Youth engagement cohort programs running in Junior Highs throughout Calgary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More intergenerational programs - More mental health programming - More social programs in general (e.g. outdoor walk groups, bingo groups, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of youth engagement programs - Young adult cohort (18-25 yrs old) is the most underserved population currently - Lack of counselling services (long wait lists)
 <p>Trellis Family and Youth Support Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Empowering individuals and communities with the support they need to grow beyond life's challenges and reach their dreams' - Resident-led work - ESL programming - Money management and entrepreneurship programs for newcomers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve current social/mental health programming - More and improved programming to support newcomers trying to build a business - More space for resident initiatives and social programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of space - Poverty/homelessness - Lack of social services available - Lack of children/ youth recreation activities and programming
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'To support youth and families in developing their potential' - Prevention and early intervention services (community-based programming) - Milestones program – at-home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth and family housing options - Youth-based recreational services hub - Expanding in indigenous supports/programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inaccessibility of basic needs (e.g. winter clothing, food security, etc) - Access to mental health services - Barriers to accessing social services (better

<p>McMan Youth Family and Community Resource Network, Okotoks</p>	<p>support for families with children who have developmental disabilities - Youth Programs to build social-emotional skills and prevent high-risk behaviors</p>		<p>support Calgarians to access services)</p>
 <p>City of Calgary Acadia/Fairview Social Worker</p>	<p>- Community, economic, and skill development with a focus on marginalized/vulnerable groups in specific communities across Calgary</p>	<p>- More church programming to fill the gaps that are not supplied by community partners/ organizations</p>	<p>- 25 community social workers across Calgary, but none in the Southern part - Lack of organizations/ service providers in the South as compared to the East and North of Calgary. - Only providers present are Trellis and Carya in South. - Need for family, newcomer, and youth programs</p>



9. Recommended Directions and Next Steps

- A. Red Deer Lake United Church representatives can authorize joint conversations with representatives of Carya, Trellis, and McMan Family Resource Network Okotoks to build relationships and clarify partnership opportunities. These joint conversations can include communication and participation in the south Calgary Community Resource Council, at which relevant programs and initiatives are planned and discussed. Contact information for the CRC can be obtained from Joel Den Haan Consulting Group. Central to these conversations would be preservation or enhancement of the values and brand identity of Red Deer Lake United Church, and how to align programs and partnerships to best reflect congregational priorities.
- B. In particular, program opportunities and space deployment for ESL training through agencies like Trellis could be early successes for community ministry.
- C. Consultations with agency partners to plan for youth/ young adult support merit additional exploration and development, with a goal of implementing initial projects for the first quarter of 2023.
- D. As part of planning, grant funding resources for both initial implementation and longer term program support should be explored. Both the congregation and agency partners may be eligible for funding. Funding streams from the Calgary Foundation and The United Church of Canada Foundation can support both aspects of partnership implementation.
- E. Once programs and partnerships are clarified, leasing arrangements should be developed in consultation with appropriate professional guidance. Chinook Winds Region needs to approve all leases of space, and the Region also has referral information for appropriate legal/ real estate professionals to assist with creating robust agreements.

