

## **Items for Board of Stewards Discussion and Church Conference for Decision on Ministry with Fair Haven UMC**

On Tuesday, February 21 at 7:00 p.m., we will engage in a leadership discussion and vote on the following:

***“Will Chapelwood UMC adopt Fair Haven UMC as a full part of our mission and ministry conditional upon the due diligence still remaining by the Board of Trustees which includes, but is not limited to: a legal audit and facilities examination by a structural/mechanical engineering company?”***

### Items of Significance

- I. The Key Elements
- II. Frequently Asked Questions
- III. The Covenant of Merger
- IV. Information from the Discernment Team

#### **I. The Key Elements**

- a. In the fall of 2016, Chapelwood was approached by the Texas Annual Conference to enter discussion with Fair Haven United Methodist Church about possible ‘adoption merger’ of Fair Haven.
- b. Study team put together to discern decision. Tracy Little (Board of Stewards Chair), Beth Tilney (SPRC Chair), Fred Gibson (Ministry Council Chair Chair), Mark Greek (Trustee and former Fair Haven member), Bob Johnson, Bob Lindsey, and John Stephens.
- c. Timeline – the window is short due to the timing needs of the Bishop and cabinet of the Texas Annual Conference. A decision has to be made by early March so that pastoral appointment decisions can be made for Fair Haven UMC.
- d. What are we deciding? On February 21 at our Board of Stewards meeting, we will also have a Church Conference dedicated to this discussion and a conditional vote (see below) of Fair Haven merging with Chapelwood.
  - i. Chapelwood will “adopt” Fair Haven UMC as a part of our mission and ministry. The word “adopt” in our covenant literally means fully acquiring their church and integrating into our ministry. While the Ministry Council and the Finance Committee have affirmed the idea after looking at the strategic possibilities and the finances, the Board of Trustees still have a few outstanding questions to be answered. These will be added as conditions to our vote:
    1. A legal audit needs to be conducted to make sure no outstanding litigation exists against Fair Haven UMC.
    2. A full facility audit by structural/mechanical firms needs to be completed and reviewed by Trustees.
    3. Other items may be included in these conditions as needed.
    4. If approved by the Church Conference, we will wait for the Trustees to complete their work and if they find the outcomes satisfactory, the approval will then be finalized.

#### **II. Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Church Conference**

- a. What is a Church Conference? The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church requires a Charge or Church Conference to do certain things in the life of the church that have impact beyond our day to day ministry operations – especially issues regarding church properties. Since property is being given to us, we must approve by Church Conference vote. A Church Conference invites all members of Chapelwood who wish to attend to listen, ask questions, and vote on the issue before us.
- b. What is the issue we are meeting about? The Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church has identified a church in our “neighborhood”, Fair Haven United Methodist Church, which needs assistance to effectively engage in vital ministry in Spring Branch. The reason Chapelwood is in discussion with Fair Haven is that a unique

“adoption merger” would benefit both Chapelwood and Fair Haven to engage in more effective ministry in our local mission field. The vote at the Church Conference on February 21 would be asked to approve, “Will Chapelwood adopt Fair Haven United Methodist Church as a part of our mission and ministry?” There will be a covenant voted upon at the meeting. The covenant is included in this document.

- c. What is an “adoption merger”? According to Jim Tomberlin in his book, *Better Together*, an “adoption merger” is a merger between a larger, stronger church and a smaller church that is stuck missionally, organizationally, and financially. Adoption Mergers are not designed for churches in danger of closing their doors but for more stable or stuck churches that embrace the belief that they can better accomplish their mission by joining a stronger church. They recognize that by joining a stronger church they could multiply their impact beyond what they could do by remaining solo. In this case, the adopted church (Fair Haven) turns over control and resources to the larger church (Chapelwood), but they bring to the table something in addition to the worship communities that meet there...they bring facilities, financial resources, staff, ministry, programs, and a day school that are integrated into Chapelwood’s overall strategy of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The biggest strength of the adoption model is that Chapelwood and Fair Haven join as a family together. Fair Haven becomes a worship community of Chapelwood with their own heritage and identity just as our other worship communities: Mercy Street, The Branch, Upper Room, Holy Family, and The Center (Contemplative).
- d. What are the main details of the covenant?
  - i. Fair Haven’s property, facilities, and finances would become Chapelwood’s. Fair Haven is located at 1330 Gessner Road and would become a “Gessner Road Campus” of Chapelwood. They own two homes in Spring Branch as well, which become property of Chapelwood.
  - ii. Fair Haven has approximately a \$1.2MM budget between the school and the church. The school and the church finished in the positive in 2016 (~+\$60,000).
  - iii. Fair Haven has approximately \$400,000 in endowments/reserves.
  - iv. Fair Haven has no debt.
  - v. Fair Haven would become a worship community of Chapelwood with their own pastor, their own core team leadership, and their unique context for mission and ministry in Spring Branch.
  - vi. The vital and vibrant ministries of Fair Haven (in which many Chapelwood members are already involved) will be strengthened to reach even more people – The Food Pantry, the Day School, the Hispanic ministry, etc.
  - vii. Fair Haven will commit to be in vital ministry with Chapelwood and Chapelwood will commit to be in vital ministry with Fair Haven.
- e. Why would Chapelwood do this?
  - i. MISSION: We share a passion for Spring Branch. Fair Haven is positioned to accomplish much for the success of our mission in the community. 70,000 cars pass Fair Haven’s campus per day. A dense, multi-ethnic population is ripe for ministry and mission.
  - ii. RESOURCES: Fair Haven is not about to close their doors – they are simply stuck and need revitalization to sustain ministry. With their current levels of giving, reserves, and properties, they offer a unique opportunity for ministry that doesn’t require investment from our current operating budget.
  - iii. AGGREGATION: The campus on Gessner gives Chapelwood the opportunity to strategically think in terms of multiple communities on another site, which will allow us to reach more people effectively and at less cost. Just imagine...Saturday nights, Sunday mornings, Sunday nights with various worship communities on a second campus.

- iv. **COMMUNITY:** We take pride in Spring Branch as our neighborhood and we love being in ministry in our neighborhood. This campus helps us touch more schools, more agencies, and reach more people who live in Spring Branch.
  - v. **LEARNING:** This process will offer a tremendous learning opportunity for us. We are already discerning best practices for multi-site, multi-community ministry. This will be our model going forward and we must learn through imitation and trial and error how to succeed in this endeavor.
  - vi. **MODELING:** We believe this adoption merger can be a teaching opportunity for the revitalization of our entire denomination.
- f. What do you need to do?
- i. Bathe the process in prayer. While we will vote on February 21, Fair Haven UMC will vote on March 5. This is not a “takeover” by any means. They will vote to approve or disapprove of this merger. As you can imagine, this is a tough decision for them. Pray for our brothers and sisters there.
  - ii. Stay focused on the vision of the church and the tasks before you now. Don’t project what may or may not happen. If approved, we will form transition teams to discern and study our strategy going forward. Those who will be affected will be involved in the process. We don’t want to spend a lot of time on it now because it may not even happen. And remember...Fair Haven is doing ministry on their own now – they will continue to do so during the transition. This will give us a runway to determine how this relationship will affect all areas of structure, staff, etc.
  - iii. The Ministry Council and Finance Committee have affirmed this adoption merger. The Trustees have said they are supportive if the other committees are, but they do ask that the vote be subject to property inspections and legal reviews that ensure there are no unknown risks and concerns. These conditions will be added to the covenant we will vote on.
- g. What if I have more questions?
- i. Please feel free to email any of the following. They are all on the study committee and have been involved in all levels of discernment:
  - ii. Fred Gibson, Chair of Ministry Council – [fgibson@tgrbp.com](mailto:fgibson@tgrbp.com)
  - iii. Beth Tilney, Chair of SPRC – [etilney@gmail.com](mailto:etilney@gmail.com)
  - iv. Tracy Little, Chair of Board of Stewards – [tracy@hmoil.com](mailto:tracy@hmoil.com)
  - v. Mark Greek, Trustee and former Fair Haven member – [mark.c.greek@gmail.com](mailto:mark.c.greek@gmail.com)
  - vi. Bob Johnson, Executive Pastor – [bjohnson@chapelwood.org](mailto:bjohnson@chapelwood.org)
  - vii. Bob Lindsey, Business Administrator – [blindsey@chapelwood.org](mailto:blindsey@chapelwood.org)
  - viii. John Stephens, Senior Pastor – [jstephens@chapelwood.org](mailto:jstephens@chapelwood.org)

**III. The Covenant of Merger** (keep in mind, a covenant is not a legal contract; The Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church in accordance with the Book of Discipline will handle the property transfers of the merger).

**Covenant Between Chapelwood UMC and Fair Haven UMC for Adoption Merger (BOD, ¶12546.1)**

Our lives are driven by the contractual. Every aspect of our life is rooted in contract language where we agree to give an amount of money and in return we receive a product or service that is agreed upon.

Covenant is the opposite of that. In the Latin, covenant is “con venire” which literally means “a coming together.” It presupposes two or more parties who come together to join in a lifelong familial or friendship agreement, such as marriage or adoption. The preferred meaning of the word covenant in the Old Testament is ‘a bond’; a covenant refers to two or more parties bound together. Covenant language is “for better or for worse.”

This covenant between Chapelwood United Methodist Church and Fair Haven United Methodist

Church is one we make before God and one another. This is a covenant of adoption where Chapelwood adopts Fair Haven as a full member of the Chapelwood family. We bond together as one to better accomplish our mission of making disciples.

Chapelwood and Fair Haven are agreeing to enter into an adoption merger. In the days of the Apostle Paul, Romans often adopted children. The adopted son would become a full member of the new family with all rights and privileges. Interestingly, they were not expected to cut ties to their previous families. They were part of a new family while retaining aspects of their former identity. In Galatians 4:4-6, Paul writes, *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”* This adoption covenant is an agreement between two redeemed communities who share one Father.

This adoption merger embraces the belief that Fair Haven and Chapelwood can better accomplish our mission by joining together. Fair Haven recognizes that by merging with Chapelwood they can multiply their impact beyond what they could do by remaining solo. Chapelwood recognizes that greater ministry can happen in Spring Branch with Fair Haven as a member of our family. Chapelwood and Fair Haven both bring gifts to this relationship. The central strength of Chapelwood and Fair Haven’s adoption model is that Fair Haven becomes a part of the larger Chapelwood family *without losing their unique heritage and identity*.

As a covenantal family we commit to the following vows:

1. We commit to pray. We are both communities of prayer. We covenant to pray for one another regularly and for our mission in the world.
2. We commit our presence. We are both presenting all that we are to be one in ministry. We bring all of ourselves into this relationship and covenant ourselves to do everything we can to make this relationship successful – for better or worse.
3. We commit our gifts. Chapelwood and Fair Haven both bring gifts to this relationship. We covenant to sharing our gifts with each other to make God’s kingdom a reality in our sphere of influence.
4. We commit our service. Chapelwood and Fair Haven have great histories of service in our neighborhood. We covenant to serve one another and our communities for Christ.
5. We commit our witness. We promise to be witnesses for Christ and for each other. We covenant to speak words of encouragement and we covenant to commit ourselves to a relationship of love and trust with each other.

#### **Our Mutual Covenant**

***By agreement of the Charge/Church Conference, we vote to merge Fair Haven United Methodist Church with Chapelwood United Methodist Church. The terms of the covenant are agreed to as stated below:***

- The Transition Process
  - Approval of this covenant by both churches as spelled out in this covenant will merge Fair Haven UMC into Chapelwood UMC. The approval will allow the Senior Pastor of Chapelwood to create a transition team made up of members of both Chapelwood and Fair Haven. The transition would outline the timeline and stages of transition going forward and report regularly to both churches. The transition will begin once both churches have agreed to the covenant and the District Superintendent has given approval.
- Our Philosophy of Ministry
  - We covenant to join in ministry together with Fair Haven retaining their name as a worship community of Chapelwood.
  - We covenant together to share one mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
  - We covenant to share one way of accomplishing that mission: to embody God’s grace as we receive it to those who need it.
  - We covenant to share one purpose: to make the kingdom of God a reality in our sphere of influence.

- We covenant to teach an intentional Discipleship Pathway that invites people to:
    - Experience God’s Grace in Worship
    - Grow in God’s Grace in Relationships
    - Share in God’s Grace in Ministry to the World
- Our Covenant for Members and Staff
  - We covenant that all members and records of Fair Haven UMC will become members and records of Chapelwood UMC (BOD ¶12546.5).
  - We covenant together that employees of Fair Haven will become employees of Chapelwood. The transition team will work with all staff to determine their passion for this new ministry and find the best places for them to continue their work for the kingdom – whether that is in their current position or a new position that leverages their strengths and skillsets. All of the employees of our family are treated with the same respect, love, and benefits. All staff agrees to live faithfully in support of the mission of our church and encourage one another in our work.
- Our Organization
  - We covenant together that as one body, we will have single governance – the governance of Chapelwood UMC. Fair Haven UMC will become a part of Chapelwood UMC. Fair Haven will be a worship community of Chapelwood UMC with their own pastor and Core Team charged with direction of mission and ministry for the community.
  - We covenant together that members of Fair Haven who desire the success of this adoption merger will have opportunities to use their gifts across Chapelwood’s governance having opportunities to serve on administrative committees and the Board of Stewards (Administrative Board) of Chapelwood. The members of Fair Haven’s Core Team will become members of the Board of Stewards and a representative of the Core Team will be a member of the Ministry Council of Chapelwood.
- Our Property and Assets
  - All Fair Haven property and assets will become property and assets of Chapelwood UMC. (per United Methodist Book of Discipline and Texas Conference of the UMC). The execution of these assets will occur under the guidance of the District Superintendent and the Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church per our polity.
  - The property on 1330 Gessner will not be sold. It will be used for effective ministry to reach people for Christ. The Fair Haven worship community, the Hispanic congregation, and other vital ministries/worship communities will utilize this campus.
  - Chapelwood will engage in property and facility study to determine maintenance needs and commit to significant upgrades using the endowments Fair Haven has designated for their property.
  - The parsonage (1718 Peer Drive, Houston, 77043) and the rental house (10407 Mayfield, Houston, 77043) of Fair Haven will become assets of Chapelwood. If sold, assets will be used to invest in ministry and facility needs on the Gessner Road campus.
  - All endowments and designated funds of Fair Haven will be committed to their intended purpose and dedicated to the Gessner Road campus improvements.
- Our Finances
  - We covenant that the Finance Office/Operations of Chapelwood will take and manage all finances and financial procedures of Fair Haven UMC. The Finance Office will process all payroll, income, tuition, tithes, fees, benefits, etc. This includes the Fair Haven worship community, Hispanic congregation, and the Fair Haven Day School.
- Our Missions
  - We covenant that the transition team will study all missions and or missionaries supported by Fair Haven and recommendations will be made to add them to the Local Serving Ministry of Chapelwood. Chapelwood and Chapelwood members already support many of the current Fair Haven missions and ministries.
- Our Ministries

- The transition team will engage in a study of all ministries and make recommendation to the Fair Haven worship community (which includes the Hispanic ministry) and the Chapelwood Lead Team. Just as we do with all of our worship communities, effective ministries are expected to continue while other ministries may combine with existing Chapelwood ministries if appropriate. We will prayerfully determine how to transition ministries that are not effectively serving their purpose.

This covenant is agreed to by Church Conference vote by Chapelwood United Methodist Church and Fair Haven United Methodist Church on the dates listed below.

**Chapelwood United Methodist Church**

**Church Conference voted to approve this covenant on February 21, 2017**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board of Stewards, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Conference Recording Secretary

**Fair Haven United Methodist Church**

**Church Conference voted to approve this covenant on March 5, 2017**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board of Governors, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Conference Recording Secretary

#### IV. A VISION FOR EFFECTIVE MISSION

Part of Chapelwood's vision for reaching Houston for Jesus Christ includes revitalizing our existing worship communities and planting new worship communities where God leads.

- Chapelwood is planting **Holy Family HTX** worship community in East Downtown (EaDo) in late 2015. They will begin weekly worship in Fall 2017.
- Chapelwood is planting a **new worship community on our campus at Greenbay** to reach people we currently are not reaching. Currently searching for pastor.
- Chapelwood will add a **'church planter'** on staff Summer 2017 to begin training for a new launch in 2019/2020 (location TBD)
- Chapelwood is open to potential **partnerships/mergers** that will benefit both Chapelwood and the partners in effectively reaching our communities as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
  - A conversation with Fair Haven UMC regarding a "adoption merger" fits into this area of Chapelwood's vision. The key question to answer is this: *Does it help both Chapelwood and Fair Haven in our mission of making disciples?*

**Leadership teams from both Chapelwood and Fair Haven have been working since December to discern the answer to this question?**

#### LANGUAGE

The word "merger" can have different meanings for different people. The central part of discussion will be to make clear what this new relationship would be called. We can ultimately name it what we want – whatever speaks into the reality of the new relationship. Some churches use the term "legacy" relationships – an agreed upon relationship that keeps the "legacy" of a church alive while uniting with another church. Another word is "adoption". This is a biblical word from Ephesians 1 and Romans 8 that speaks to God adopting all of us as God's children. Adoption is all about making someone a full part of the family. Another scriptural term is "grafting". In Romans 11, Paul speaks of how a branch can be grafted to a larger tree and connect to the rich root of the tree producing fruit. The branch becomes a part of the tree sharing the same life-giving source.

We landed on the term "adoption merger" from Jim Tomberlin's book on mergers entitled, Better Together. Structurally it would work this way: Fair Haven UMC would merge into Chapelwood UMC. Currently Chapelwood has 6 worship communities: Sanctuary (Greenbay campus with 3 services), Mercy Street, Contemplative, The Branch, Upper Room, and Holy Family. Fair Haven UMC would become the Fair Haven community of Chapelwood.

What is a 'worship community' at Chapelwood? For all intents and purposes, it is a smaller 'church within a church'; or 'community of communities' within a larger family/congregation. In many ways, it is exactly what our United Methodist connectionalism was always supposed to be – we truly are one large family with many expressions. We may look and sound different, but we have the "same" substance.

- Worship communities have **their own pastors** (Sanctuary – John Stephens; Mercy Street – Melissa Maher; Contemplative – Jerry Webber; The Branch – Luis Palomo; Upper Room – Christian Washington; Holy Family – Jacob Breeze).
- Worship communities have **their own leadership Core Teams**. These teams help lead the specific shape of ministry in their contexts. They work with the pastors and the larger Chapelwood network to live into the larger vision of the church in their own unique way. There is encouragement, training, resource, and accountability for the Core Teams to help them succeed. Worship communities are not independent and they

are not autonomous – they work with the broader leadership of Chapelwood to engage in effective ministry.

- Worship communities have **their own worship styles**. Each of our services is different. Music, preaching, and discipleship all happen in the way that is most effective for their context. But, they work within the broader discipleship pathway of Chapelwood and utilize the resources that connect us all.
- Worship communities **love, care, support, and serve the entire community of Chapelwood**. The broader Chapelwood resources allow for retreats, programs, and resources that all communities share. They learn to love and care for one another in ways that help us reflect both unity and diversity in our midst.

### How Would This Happen?

From the Book of Discipline, 2016

From the polity perspective, this would be a “merger”. While there isn’t much in the Discipline about merger, it does give some direction.

¶ 2546. Merger of Local United Methodist Churches— Two or more local churches, in order to more effectively fulfill their ministry (¶¶ 201-204), may merge and become a single church by pursuing the following procedure:

1. The merger must be proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches by a resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger.
2. The plan of the merger as proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches shall be approved by each of the charge conferences in order for the merger to be effected.
3. The merger must be approved by the superintendent or superintendents of the district or districts in which the merging churches are located.
4. The requirements of any and all laws of the state or states in which the merging churches are located affecting or relating to the merger of such churches must be complied with, and in any case where there is a conflict between such laws and the procedure outlined in the Discipline, said laws shall prevail and the procedure outlined in the Discipline shall be modified to the extent necessary to eliminate such conflict.
5. All archives and records (including membership) of churches involved in a merger shall become the responsibility of the successor church.

### THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS

1. Strategy - Mission
  - a. Would this union help our churches engage and accomplish our mission to the world of making disciples?
  - b. Demographics of community (unchurched population, ethnic, socio-economic, etc.) This helps us think about how we engage in ministry on Gessner Road.
  - c. Fair Haven would become a worship community of Chapelwood UMC, keeping their name and engaging in their own unique, contextual ministry to reach the community around them. Worship services would be studied and a strategy for schedule, style, etc. would be created in consultation with the Fair Haven Core Team and the Chapelwood leadership.
  - d. The campus on Gessner Road would be studied to see if/how additional worship communities could thrive at that location helping the overall mission and assisting the Fair Haven worship community to accomplish even more on Gessner Road.
  - e. Current staffing would be discerned for strategic success. The goal is to utilize those who want to see this relationship be successful and want to work together. We will



value all staff and strive to find ways for them to be plugged into new and exciting ministry. Appointed positions will be worked out with the District Superintendent and Bishop.

- f. Seed families from other Chapelwood worship communities will be identified to assist the Fair Haven community to grow.
- g. Campus property/facility will be evaluated and upgrades made to better accomplish mission.

## 2. Structure and Leadership

- a. Fair Haven UMC would become the Fair Haven community of Chapelwood.
  - i. A new Fair Haven Core Team would be formed. The current Board of Governors would help name the Core Team through prayerful discernment – choosing those who are supportive of the new relationship and long for vital ministry. New Core Team members will be added as the community grows and needs additional members. Core Team chair serves on Chapelwood Ministry Council and Board of Stewards. Other members of the Fair Haven community will serve on Board of Stewards and other Core Teams across Chapelwood that engage in vital ministry that would overlap with the Fair Haven community.
- b. Members of Fair Haven UMC would become members of Chapelwood UMC - worshipping and participating in the Fair Haven community. This is the same structure Chapelwood uses for all worship communities.
- c. The Senior Pastor and Staff Parish Committee of Chapelwood, along with input from the Fair Haven Core Team would select the pastor of the Fairhaven community after prayerful study and discernment. Staff of the Fair Haven community would fall under the leadership of the Worship Community Pastor of Fair Haven, the Chapelwood Lead Team, and the Staff Parish Relations Committee of Chapelwood – just as in all other communities.

## 3. Financial

- a. All finances of Chapelwood UMC are handled through the Chapelwood UMC finance and business office. This includes the Chapelwood School for Young Children and all Worship Communities.
- b. In this merger, Fair Haven UMC's accounting, giving, payroll, benefits, etc., would move from its current processes to the Chapelwood business office.
- c. The Fair Haven worship community would still have its own operating budget and a "cost to serve" model created by the FH Core Team and the Finance Office. Each worship community of Chapelwood shapes its own budget, sends it to the Lead Team and Finance Committee, which ultimately approves it or asks the worship community pastor and core team to edit it.
- d. Chapelwood is a multi-campus church with one Finance Committee that oversees the budgets of all worship communities, ministries, endowments, and reserves. The current financial oversight would fall under Chapelwood's structure and Finance Committee.
- e. Chapelwood examined the following from Fair Haven UMC in the discernment process:
  - i. Current year budget/forecast
  - ii. P&L, Balance Sheet, Audited Financials
  - iii. Previous 5 years of budget/actuals
  - iv. Previous 5 years of donation history (pledged/unpledged)
  - v. Reserves
  - vi. Debt (short-term, long-term)
  - vii. Designations/Restrictions
  - viii. Most recent capital campaign results
  - ix. Salaries, Expenses, Benefits Costs/Programs for Staff

## 4. Assets

- a. Chapelwood is a multi-campus church with one Board of Trustees who oversees all property/campuses owned by Chapelwood.

- b. In this merger, the campus on Gessner Road and the two homes owned by Fair Haven would become property of Chapelwood UMC and under the direction of the Board of Trustees.
  - c. Chapelwood examined the following in discernment process (we are still in process with structural/mechanical engineering audit):
    - i. Need asset valuations
    - ii. Maintenance Plans/Forecasts
    - iii. Memorial Designations/Restrictions
    - iv. Major recent maintenance/purchase history
    - v. Building plans, blueprints, square footage, etc
    - vi. Known issues requiring attention
5. Legal Issues
- a. The Texas Conference of the UMC would be involved with legal authority to oversee and approve merger between Fair Haven UMC and Chapelwood UMC.
  - b. Chapelwood examined the following (NOTE: we are still in process of the legal audit):
    - i. Contracts with Service Providers
    - ii. "Promises" made to staff or members (ie, moral, but not contractual)
    - iii. Ownership status of land, building and assets after execution of agreement (all property would be owned by Chapelwood)
6. Risk
- a. Chapelwood examined the following in discernment:
    - i. Insurance Policy and Claims experiences
    - ii. Lawsuits (Pending or Closed)
    - iii. Land use, Environmental regulations, Neighborhood association restrictions, etc

### Fair Haven Information

These are the questions received from the Fair Haven leadership team. Many are questions from congregation members.

1. **Existing services:** Currently, Fair Haven has three worship services and another community (Korean) on site. Based on current attendance patterns, staffing, and budget, Fair Haven is discovering difficulty growing. If merger is approved, Chapelwood would engage in strategic study with our consultants and others of how to best revitalize the existing communities for growth. The new Fair Haven Core Team, the Fair Haven Worship Community Pastor, and the Chapelwood Lead Team would ultimately make the decision together.
2. **The Food Pantry**
  - a. The Food Pantry is a vital ministry not just for Fair Haven but for the Spring Branch community. Chapelwood has been a partner with the Food Pantry for many years. The Food Pantry is a priority and will continue. We would begin to dream about how we could do even more through the ministry of the Food Pantry!
3. **The Day School**
  - a. The Fair Haven Day School has 100 children from 20 different countries. It operates in the positive each year financially. Our goals in the merger:
    - i. Helps play a vital role in our disciple-making mission – the school is a ministry of the church and helps us in our mission! It is not a "separate" entity.
    - ii. Stays vital and healthy.
    - iii. Continues to ministers to children and families.
    - iv. Works in concert with the worship communities on the Gessner Road campus to provide ministry to all families in our community.
    - v. Become a part of our Family Discipleship Ministries Department receiving training, resource, equipment, etc., needed for vital ministry.

- vi. Staff would be included in conversations and invited to participate in the new relationship with Chapelwood! Our hope and goal is to keep every employee and help them to help us in accomplishing our mission!
- vii. See more about staff and their participation below.

**4. The Congregation Hispania – Hispanic Ministry**

- a. Chapelwood is engaged with many Spring Branch partners around Hispanic ministry. Our pastor at our Branch worship community, Rev. Luis Palomo, has partnered with many of the same ministries Fair Haven has been in partnership with – MAM, Afterschool Enrichment, Westside Homeless, Spring Spirit Baseball, Newspring, etc.
- b. We would have our Hispanic leaders of Chapelwood meet and envision an even greater ministry in Spring Branch alongside the existing ministry on Gessner.
- c. We are confident that the campus on Gessner Road will be vital to the growth of our mission for Hispanic families. We believe Hispanic ministry will be very important on this campus.

**5. Youth and Children's Ministry**

- a. First, there will be a season of transition to study needs before we commit current staff resources to additional tasks.
- b. Chapelwood’s Family Discipleship Ministry, led by Heather Sims, has great resources that work with and equip all our worship communities. The benefit of a merger between Chapelwood and Fair Haven is that children and youth can access ministry at both Gessner Campus and the Greenbay Campus:
  - i. Staffing resources will be evaluated, but if there is a merger, Chapelwood would find staff for youth and children’s working through our overall ministry to engage in vital ministry in the Fair Haven community and on Gessner Road.
  - ii. Children’s Ministry – Betsy Sutherland leads a team that works with every community; resourcing, training, and equipping for successful children’s ministry. She recently helped our Upper Room worship community create a new URKids program and over 20 to 30 kids participate each week...all with volunteers from the worship community who are resourced by our Children’s department.
  - iii. Student Ministry – Sarah Patillo leads a team that also works with all communities; resourcing, enabling, training, etc., for successful youth ministry. There are many camps and combined programs, but we also work with each worship community to help them establish their own programs as well. Mercy Street and the Branch communities both have their own youth and children’s ministries that are resourced by Chapelwood’s Family Discipleship Ministries
  - iv. Special Needs Ministry – Karen Lopes leads a ministry with over 100 special needs youth and adults. The resources to help families with special needs is an amazing ministry that can resource families who may have special needs in the Fair Haven community.
  - v. Recreation Ministry – Cason Sicking leads a large recreation ministry in Memorial and Spring Branch. Spring Spirit Baseball is looking to expand to soccer in the future. Chapelwood has sports leagues that minister all across Spring Branch.

**6. Funds at Fair Haven Fair Haven has the following: 9 Endowments; Day School revenue; Designated funds that seem to total approximately \$400,000**

- a. The Finance and Business office of Chapelwood would manage all finances, reserves, endowments, and other business items. These funds are designated to the Gessner Road campus and would be used for the Gessner Road campus.
- b. The Finance office of Chapelwood and the Finance Committee will control all finances of the merger.

**7. What will happen to Fair Haven staff?**

- a. All appointed clergy are under the authority of the Bishop and District Superintendent. Paul Thomasson, Bob Luton, and Jairo Ortiz would fall into these categories. We would consult with the pastors, the DS, and the FH Core Team to discern what is best for growing the Fair Haven community. That would be our priority.
- b. Other Staff:
  - i. Fair Haven obviously has a great community and staff to have such long tenures.
  - ii. We would evaluate the mission and ministry of all staff. We would ask the following questions?
    - 1. Will they be supportive in this new relationship and assist in the mission of making disciples?
    - 2. Will they work collaboratively in helping to make ministry better?
    - 3. Will they seek unity in a merger relationship? Will they be willing to work with the new team?
    - 4. This will be a new structure and a new way of organizing. We feel confident that if the employees are excited about ministry together, we will be excited to have them come alongside us in ministry.
    - 5. Custodial work at Chapelwood is managed by DTK services. This would also be the case at the Gessner campus.

#### **8. Governance**

- a. Fair Haven will be 100% part of Chapelwood – there will be a Fair Haven worship community on the Gessner Road campus
- b. The Fair Haven Core Team will work with other ministry teams for ministry purposes. We will also tap positive, effectual leaders from FH to serve on larger leadership roles – SPRC, Finance, Trustees, Ministry Council, Board of Stewards – at the larger Chapelwood level.

#### **9. Future ministries - What are the hopes and dreams for new ministries at 1330 Gessner?**

- a. Some of this has been addressed above. We would want to pull in the best resources available to help us prayerfully develop a strategic vision for the Gessner Road campus.
- b. Our vision for this new relationship is to help both Chapelwood and Fair Haven be more successful in reaching our communities in West Houston. We believe that God can do more with us together than with us separate.
- c. Think of the possibilities:
  - i. Vital, thriving Fair Haven community that is growing every year...experiencing new members to their community. There is absolutely no reason at all that the Fair Haven community of Chapelwood couldn't have at least 500 in average worship attendance and possibly more within 3 years.
  - ii. Large, dynamic Hispanic ministry in Spring Branch within Methodism. The impact on the neighborhood would be phenomenal. Gessner Road campus should aim for at least 500 in worship in Hispanic worship in 3 years.
  - iii. A strong youth and children's program that reaches families IN the neighborhood!
  - iv. Dynamic worship each and every Sunday with uplifting preaching.
  - v. A "headquarters" for mission in Spring Branch with vital partners utilizing our facilities – Food Pantry, MAM, job training, after school programs (many of these things are being done now...just think of how we could work together)
  - vi. If the growth meets or exceeds our goals, we would look to expand the campus if the possibilities were presented.