



**Questions Asked
by St. Stephen Members
Answered by Christ United Presbyterian Session Members,
St. Stephen Council Members, Pastor Anne Veldhuisen, and Pastor Lyle Snyder**

1. **Would we inherit a pastor?** *Yes. St. Stephen would be acquiring another pastor. While Anne would be serving both Lutherans and Presbyterians, she would remain on the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) roster.*
2. **What would be the fate of Esther's Kitchen? Would they bring funds to update the kitchen? Want to keep the ministry going? Is there anyway to put our name on it?** *Esther's Kitchen would not be coming with the move/merger. This is both because St. Stephen does not have the space to host the ministry, as well as most of those who eat at Esther's Kitchen live near downtown. Say some prayers that they kind find a location for the ministry.*
3. **Would they pay some sort of rent?** *No, under the plan preferred by council, they would not be paying rent. We would be one congregation together.*
4. **Would they do services with us? Would we add a service?** *We would be worshipping together. We would not add a separate Presbyterian Service. However, we may be having to look at the possibility of adding a 3rd service because both our 8:30 and 10:30 services would be full.*
5. **How many Sunday School students coming over? Our classes are full.** *There are about 15 total Sunday School students. Our classes are usually only full in the first couple months of the year.*
6. **Would we lose our identity as Lutherans? Would they lose their identity as Presbyterians?** *-Yes and No. It depends upon how much individuals want to hold on to their identity. Identity is something people hold on to. For instance, there are members of St. Stephen who consider themselves Methodist! Many at St. Stephen come from different tradition backgrounds, and not just Lutheran. Furthermore, this would likely spawn conversations about differences between Presbyterians and Lutherans.*
7. **Does the ELCA have an opinion on this?** *The ELCA Churchwide Council has a policy called "Documents of Governance and Policy Related to Federated and Union Congregations." The ELCA Churchwide Unit does have examples (though they are rare) of what is called a Union Congregation (one church of two denominations). The Southwestern Minnesota Synod Council of the ELCA would have to approve any constitution of a Union Congregation. Bishop Jon Anderson of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod is supportive and believes in congregations working together. He and the Synod would have a very important role and interest in making sure the merger happens correctly, so that it would not have negative impacts upon other congregations in the synod who would be looking to do something similar.*
8. **What would happen to our councils? Have 2? Or 1? Or joint council?** *The plan thought best by the St. Stephen Council and the Christ-United Session would be 1 council.*
9. **Would this allow us to have a paid maintenance person if this gives us more use of the building?** *Likely not at this time, as the funds coming over would be used to pay for the other pastor. However, if you have ideas on custodian/maintenance, you surely can talk to the Council!*
10. **Is there funding/grants for this available from the ELCA or from the PCUSA (Presbyterian Church USA)?** *Unfortunately, no.*

11. Can we start adult ed. classes? *Yes. Having two pastors would free up time for both Pastor Anne and Pastor Lyle to do some adult education.*

12. What is the size of their congregation? *About 100 members.*

13. How does their faith differ from Lutheranism? *The Presbyterian Faith is very similar to Lutheranism. Both are confessional reformation movements. Lutheranism went from Northern Germany on into Scandinavia. Presbyterianism grew through Scotland and England. Lutheranism follows the confessional writings of the Book of Concord (Luther's Small Catechism, Augsburg Confession, etc.). Presbyterianism follows the Westminster Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and a number of other confessions. The biggest difference is an understanding of how faith happens. Within Lutheranism, faith is a work of the spirit that is granted at baptism, and is not a decision someone makes. Within Presbyterianism, faith is predestined by God. Presbyterians do baptize infants. Our Sacraments (Baptism and Communion) are the same, though we differ on an understanding of what communion is. Lutherans believe Christ is fully present in the bread & wine. Presbyterians believe Christ is symbolically present. Our denominations have an agreement for full altar pulpit fellowship between the two denominations. This means Lutheran churches can be served by Presbyterian pastors, and Presbyterian churches can be served by Lutheran pastors.*

14. How would the services change? *Services likely would not change much. Our services are very similar. One of the biggest concerns of some at Christ-United Presbyterian was what we use in the Lord's prayer. We have used both "sins" and "trespasses." They use "debts." We likely could use all three interchangeably.*

15. When Pastor Ann does the service, will we have a service with no liturgy? *It would look a lot like the way Pastor Lyle leads a service.*

16. What is the time table? *The time table is wide open! The process would likely require the following*
-A number of details negotiated between leaders of both congregations.
-Writing of a new constitution which would have to be approved by the Minnesota River Valley Presbytery of the PCUSA and the Southwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.
-At least two more congregation votes from St. Stephen on a finalized constitution.
-The sale of the Christ United Building.

17. Can they sell their building? *The plan would be for them to sell their building. Everyone is hopeful they can.*

18. Would we assume their debt? *Christ-United Presbyterian has no debt.*