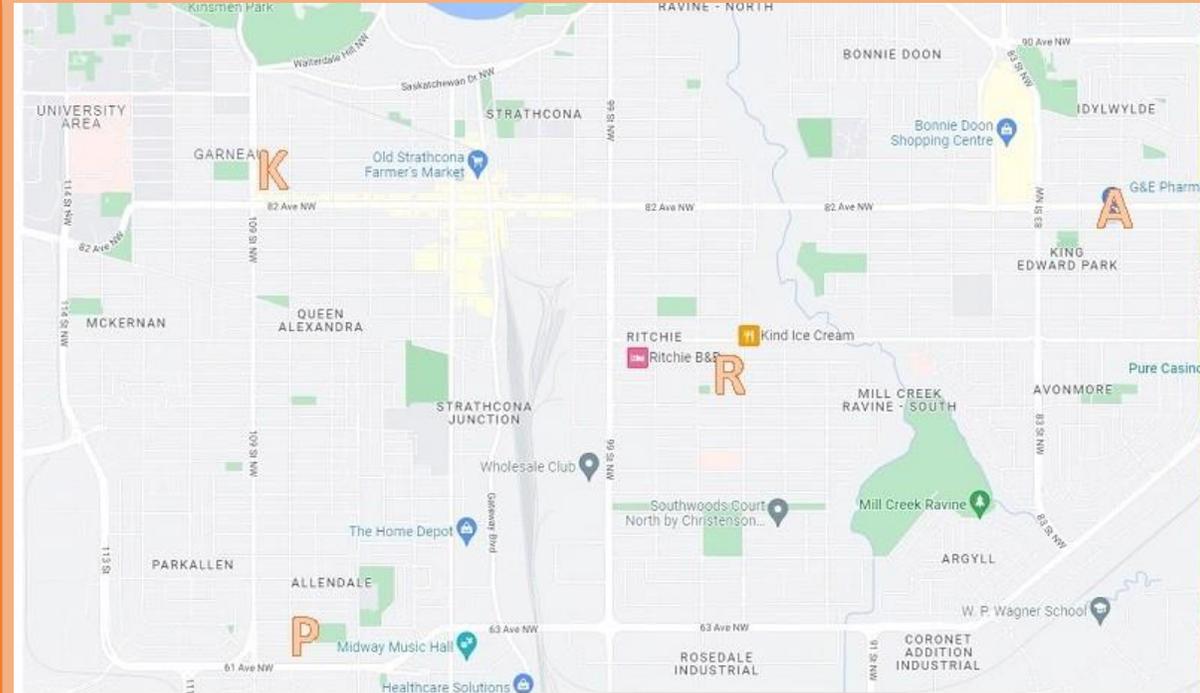




In the early 2010s, more than half a dozen United Churches south of the river in Edmonton were invited to consider their futures together.

Four congregations
agreed to explore a
formal cooperation:
Avonmore;
Knox-Metropolitan;
Pleasantview; *Ritchie.*



They had (at least) six things in
common:

1. A willingness to cooperate

2. Buildings that were getting harder
and harder to maintain

3. Financial challenges - either current or coming: including how to fund staff

4. Stable or shrinking numbers of people who attend or are active

5. Enough hope (or desperation) to try something different

6. A willingness to lose in order to gain
(specifically: to give up their building)

People met and talked and imagined
what could be.

For reasons including *age, size,*
visibility, parking, the Avonmore
building was chosen as the site of an
amalgamated community of faith.

Everyone gave up their building:
Knox-Met and Pleasantview were sold;
Ritchie's title was transferred to the
Edmonton Korean United Church.
Avonmore had several new people,
with no past involvement, making
decisions about its future including
changing everything about it.

In November 2015, Edmonton Presbytery created a four-point pastoral charge: **United On Whyte.**

Intentional Interim Ministry was engaged to manage the transition.

Over the first half of 2016, the congregations started worshipping together in the Avonmore building.

A vision was developed.

A new governance structure was
approved.

Plans for the proceeds of sale were
made: including money for building
renovations

United On Whyte began discerning
whether to become an
Affirming Ministry.

The four congregations were formally amalgamated into one and the Pastoral Charge was re-named **Spirit of Hope**.

Difficult staffing decisions were made where excess staff existed.

A future ministry position was developed through the Pastoral Relations *profile* process.

The Interim Ministry ended in June 2019
A Call was made for January 2020

Building Renovation planning and wide consultations began in earnest in
March 2020

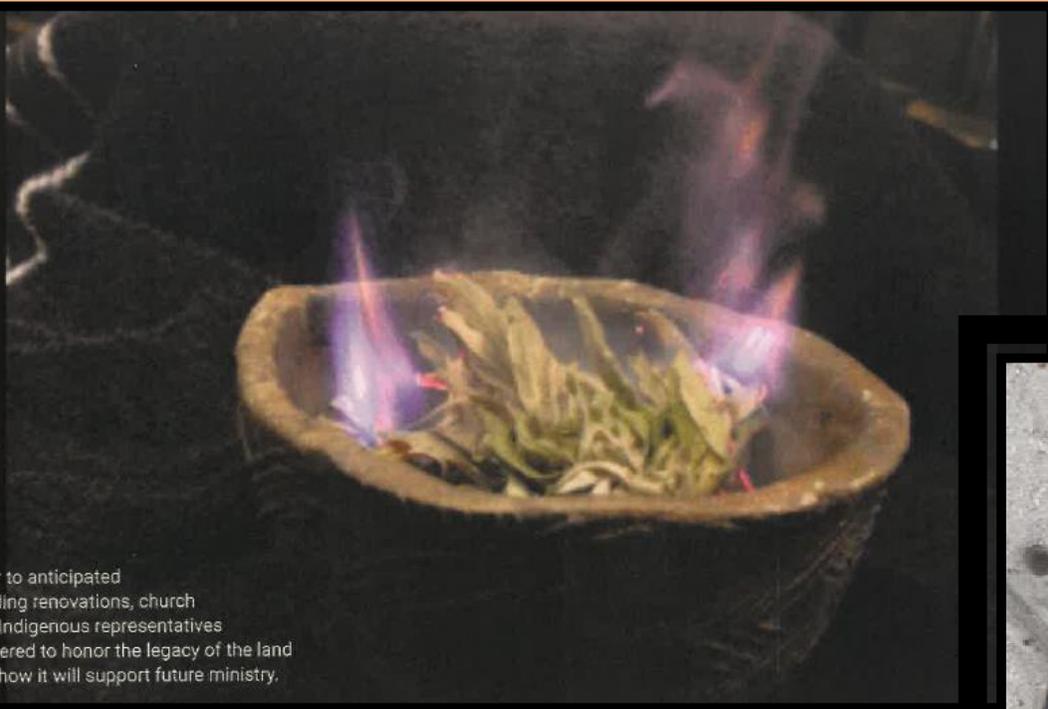
(anything else happen in March 2020?)

Construction began in March 2021.
Only the church gym was accessible for
worship on Sundays.

In June 2021, Spirit of Hope decided to apply for ***Affirming Ministry*** designation with Affirm United/S'affirmer Ensemble.

The renovated building became usable in February 2022.





Prior to anticipated building renovations, church and Indigenous representatives gathered to honor the legacy of the land and how it will support future ministry.



"Spirit of Treaty" by Dënësųlinē & Métis writer, teacher, poet and artist, Matthew James Weigel. This medallion illustrates the importance of Treaty through meaningful symbols of time and space.



Spirit of Hope Values:

- community that is caring, welcoming, inclusive, diverse and respectful of all;
- spiritual nurture that inspires us, deepens our faith and transforms us through multiple means of expression;

- compassionate engagement with the broader community to build shared understanding, partnerships and social justice;
- opportunities for growth in broadening our understanding of the stories of our faith and what they mean in our lives and our world.

Post-renovation
Post-covid restrictions
much is going well and progressing as
envisioned

But...

Amalgamating four congregations was not

$$1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$$

Nearly half of the active congregants from the four congregations did not become active at Spirit of Hope.

Transition work is not for everyone.

Renovation costs during a pandemic were much higher than expected.

Decisions had to be made to balance vision, function, and financial stewardship.

Even though the renovations were fully paid for through building sale proceeds, regular attention to the operating budget needs to be appropriate for the congregation as it is now

During COVID, the SofHUC Leadership Team saw as priorities:

- continue to offer regular Sunday services even when in-person was not allowed or was unwise;
- proactive and regular communication with everyone on the church list;

During COVID, the SofHUC Leadership Team saw as priorities:

- continue the affirming and renovation processes;
- continue to offer learning and social events online;

During COVID, the SofHUC Leadership Team saw as priorities:

- keep up Leadership Team and Congregational meeting schedule (i.e. not put off decisions just because we can't be in the same room)

Post COVID restrictions and post renovation, Spirit of Hope:

- is intentionally trying to live into its stated Vision and Values

Vision

We are unique spiritual beings, seeking wholeness within ourselves, community, and creation.

Guided and inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus and other sources of great wisdom, we seek to ***learn, change, and grow.***

...

Spirit of Hope Values:

- community that is caring, welcoming, inclusive, diverse and respectful of all;
- spiritual nurture that inspires us, deepens our faith and transforms us through multiple means of expression;

Spirit of Hope Values:

- **compassionate engagement with the broader community to build shared understanding, partnerships and social justice;**

Spirit of Hope Values:

- opportunities for growth in broadening our understanding of the stories of our faith and what they mean in our lives and our world.



LESSON:

Amalgamation is an **END** to who we were and the creation of something brand **NEW** that is exciting.