

BETTER TOGETHER

The Leadership of **Hillside Church of Marin** and **Lucas Valley Community Church** believe God is guiding us to an exciting new future. After several months of conversation, prayer, and deep consideration of the mission, vision, and direction of both churches, the Board, Council and staff of Hillside Church of Marin and Lucas Valley Community Church believe God is leading us to join together as one church. We have come to believe that this is the best way for our individual communities to more effectively reach the people of Marin with the love and hope of Jesus, and that God is opening a door for us to move into the future together.

We are proposing that Lucas Valley Community Church merge with Hillside Church of Marin to become one church gathering in two locations.

Why we can be better together.

There's an African proverb that puts it this way: "When you run alone, you run fast. But when you run together, you run far." But is that true of churches? Is it possible for two churches to be "better together" than they might be separately? We believe it is. Specifically, we believe that by joining Hillside Church of Marin and Lucas Valley Community Church we will be more effective at reaching the unchurched population of Marin, we will be better positioned to love and serve our communities, and we will be able to offer stronger ministries within the church. We believe that this will be a win for Lucas Valley, a win for Hillside, and most importantly, a win for the Kingdom of God. But our deepest conviction is this: by joining together we are walking the path of love and service Jesus is calling us to walk.

How did this proposal come about?

For many years there has been a special relationship between Hillside and Lucas Valley. The various pastors of both churches have always been friends and in many ways we have been "sister churches" often working together or alongside one another in our respective communities.

As part of a vision for the future, Hillside, under the leadership of Pastor Steve Pridemore has been thinking and praying about how to best make room for growth, engage and serve our community, and share God's love. Time and again as they prayed, God seemed to be pointing to Lucas Valley.

When the Lucas Valley Council began thinking about how to fill the recently vacant Lead Pastor role, one of the options presented was the possibility of a merger with a like-minded church that could lead Lucas Valley into a new chapter of health and vitality.

As the leadership of Lucas Valley contemplated the best next step, they sensed God was asking them to take a bold step in order to more effectively reach the surrounding community.

Based on our shared history, trusted relationship, similar culture, and aligned vision and values we began a conversation to explore possible ways to be better together through a merger. The leadership of both churches now feels that God was uniquely leading both churches to this unified vision.

What does it mean for Lucas Valley to merge with Hillside?

One way to think about what this means is to think about the merger as an adoption. Lucas Valley will take on the name, culture, and values of its new family: Hillside Church of Marin. In turn, Hillside will celebrate, honor and build on the strengths of Lucas Valley's rich legacy. Our shared values, beliefs, and approach to ministry make us confident that this transition, while it will take some time, will go well.

What are the benefits of this proposed merger?

The merged congregation will re-launch with people from both churches who love Jesus and who are passionate about making an impact for the Kingdom of God. The church staff will also benefit from being a part of a larger team. We believe this merger will strengthen the current congregation of Lucas Valley, building on its strong legacy of mission and discipleship. In addition, people who currently call Hillside home and live in Northern Marin will have the option to attend a Hillside Church location nearby and easily invite their neighbors.

What does it mean for Hillside to be a multi-site church?

It means we will be one church in multiple locations. Namely, we will share one vision, one set of values, one budget, one ministry strategy, one teaching team, one Lead Pastor, and one board. Key ministries will be constant across all locations, and will include excellent weekend worship services with the same sermon series, family ministries, small groups, and local mission. There

will also be shared central operations which will allow the location specific staff to focus on ministry to the church and community.

How can we do this without burning out the current staff?

This has been one of our guiding questions from the beginning of our conversation. We are very aware that this won't work if we just double everyone's workload! The relaunched Lucas Valley congregation will be staffed with a full-time Site Pastor, a part-time Family Ministry Director, a part time Worship Leader and a shared administrative support team. This merger will also allow us to hire a part time Director of Operations to be shared between the two locations and the two preschools. This will take much of that work off of Pastor Steve's plate and allow him to focus more on equipping and investing in leaders. It will take work to get there but we believe that this will make our ministry more sustainable and healthy in the long run.

Who will be the pastor? What will happen to the current Lucas Valley staff?

Steve Pridemore will be the Lead Pastor over both locations and a new Site Pastor will be hired to serve at the Lucas Valley location.

Bill McCready, the current Transitional Interim, will continue on staff as the Interim Site Pastor until (a) he secures a new position, or (b) the Site Pastor is hired - whichever comes first.

The other Lucas Valley staff are supportive of the merger and are in discussions about their future roles if the merger is approved.

How will teaching be handled at each location?

Each location will have live teaching by one of the pastors. Steve Pridemore will continue to be the primary teacher at the Corte Madera Location and the new Site Pastor will be the primary teacher at Lucas Valley. The sermon series, topic, and scripture will be the same at both locations.

What will the merged church be called?

Typically, in situations like this where one church "adopts" another church, the adopted church takes the name of the parent church. So the new

church will be called Hillside Church - Lucas Valley. The church as a whole will retain the name "Hillside Church of Marin" with the two locations being referred to online, in print, etc. as "Lucas Valley" and "Corte Madera" or "Hillside - Lucas Valley" and "Hillside - Corte Madera" depending on context. Hillside's name carries value, a positive reputation and recognition in the community and we want to build on that value. Hillside refers to the various Hillside's in Scripture (sermon on the mount, Golgotha) not merely the topographical feature of our Corte Madera location.

What is the timeline for this proposed merger?

We will have two congregational Q&A meetings at each location in the coming weeks. Hillside Q&A Meetings: Sunday, July 8th following the second service and Monday, July 16th at 7:00PM. Lucas Valley Q&A Meetings: following the service on Sunday, July 8th and Sunday, July 15th.

Both churches will take a congregational vote on the recommendation on Sunday, July 22nd. If both churches approve the recommendation, Lucas Valley will have a final legacy celebration service on Sunday, August 26th. On September 2nd we will have a special first joint service at Hillside - Corte Madera followed by a celebration.

Both groups would then worship together in Corte Madera through the fall. Why so long? We believe this is a critical time for us to forge an identity as a united church and prepare to re-launch Lucas Valley together. This will also be a time where we will be hiring staff, training people to be part of the various ministry teams, recruiting people to join the re-launch team, and updating the Lucas Valley facility.

In November and December we would host three "preview" services - including services on Christmas Eve! Our goal will be to re-launch in full on the first Sunday of the new year!

What will happen to the other churches that use the Lucas Valley facility?

We will work to continue a partnership with both churches, working with them to continue hosting their worship gatherings.

What will happen to the Lucas Valley Facilities?

The re-launched Lucas Valley congregation will meet at the current Lucas Valley facility at 2000 Las Gallinas in San Rafael. The plan is to do some renovations to the building to get it ready for the launch.

What are the financial implications of merging?

How will finances be managed?

Both Hillside and Lucas Valley are in a strong financial position. Both churches and preschools have strong reserves set aside, balanced budgets and various sources of income.

Upon completion of the merger Hillside Church would assume all of Lucas Valley's assets and debt. The current Lucas Valley facility is a well maintained facility with a 200 seat auditorium, ministry center, preschool and a parsonage. This property is in a prime location at the intersection of Las Gallinas Avenue and Lucas Valley Road. There is currently a \$371,000 debt remaining on this facility that Hillside will assume. The Lucas Valley congregation has been faithfully paying the debt down and will continue to do so as Hillside Church - Lucas Valley. If needed the debt could be repaid from the reserves Lucas Valley has on hand.

Hillside is currently debt free and owns a similar facility with a 200 seat auditorium, several meeting rooms, a preschool and a parsonage (currently used for offices and meeting space).

All Hillside locations will operate under one unified budget but each location and school will be accounted for separately.

What will happen to the current Lucas Valley Council?

Hillside Church of Marin is a staff led church that is governed by a Board consisting of four to eight church members and Pastor Steve Pridemore. This Board will oversee both locations and their preschools. Upon completion of the merger, Lucas Valley's Council will be dissolved. After the initial year of transition our goal will be to have 1-2 people who regularly attend the Lucas Valley location join the board through the normal process. During the transition year two members of the current Lucas Valley council will be present at Hillside board meetings.

Will this impact the Preschool?

Both Hillside and Lucas Valley run vibrant high quality preschools that serve the surrounding community. These will continue to operate as separate schools but the directors are both excited about having a sister school to work with!

What will happen to current Lucas Valley mission commitments?

Hillside Church will honor current Lucas Valley missionary commitments through June 2019. In 2019, Lucas Valley mission initiatives will go through the same assessment as do all Hillside initiatives.

Will current Lucas Valley Community Church membership be transferred to Hillside Church of Marin?

Current Lucas Valley Members will be invited to transfer their membership if they choose to do so. To help those interested in transferring their membership make an informed decision following the vote, we will host an informational meeting at Lucas Valley about Hillside's history, structure, and expectations of members. The goal would be to welcome all interested Lucas Valley members into full membership at Hillside and create an opportunity for attendees to join the church.

Is a vote required for the merger?

Yes, the bylaws of both churches require congregational approval by the members of each church for the merger to be finalized. A vote will take place at each location during a special meeting on July 22nd.

What's my part?

There are four key things you can do:

CELEBRATE. These are exciting days for Hillside and Lucas Valley as God is leading us into a new vision for the future. It is a great opportunity to help even more people become rooted in Jesus and released to His mission.

PRAY. Pray that God will bless this endeavor. We are excited about what could be, but know that it's God's Spirit that makes all of this possible. Pray that lives will be changed as people are reconciled to God as a result of this step of faith!

JOIN. If you already attend Lucas Valley or live in the area, join the core team that will re-launch this congregation. During the fall there will be opportunities to join the teams we will be building, get involved and serve. Even if you do not live in the Lucas Valley area but live in Northern Marin this is a great chance for you to serve in a new, exciting endeavor.

INVITE. Invite your Lucas Valley and Northern Marin friends to services following the re-launch.

Where can I go if I have questions?

If you have further questions please plan on attending one of the congregational Q&A meetings. Additionally, feel free to reach out to the leadership of either church or email your questions to together@hillsidemarin.org or pastor@lucasvalleychurch.org.

DATES AT A GLANCE:

Q&A Mtgs. at Lucas Valley: July 8 & 15	Q&A Mtgs. at Hillside: July 8 & 16	Vote at Hillside and Lucas Valley: July 22	Celebration Service at Lucas Valley: Aug. 26	First Joint Service at Hillside: Sep. 2	Preview Services: 3 Sundays in Nov/Dec	Hillside - Lucas Valley Launch: Jan. 6
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