

**Center for Church Renewal**  
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# **THE RENEWAL LEGACY PROJECT OUTLINED**

# Project Focus

The Renewal Legacy Project comes along-side congregations contemplating the completion of their congregation's journey by providing assessment, coaching and assistance with the multiplicity of details and concerns related to completing well and leaving a legacy of blessing.

## Steps to Completing and Blessing

### Step 1: Initial Conversations

- A Renewal Legacy Coach/Team has initial conversations with congregational leaders about congregational life-cycles and the location of the church on that life-cycle.
- An assessment tool is administered to determine if completion is the best option.
- Various resources are made available for consideration and review including:
  - IN DYING WE ARE REBORN by Peter Bush
  - LEGACY CHURCHES by Stephen Gray and Franklin Dumond
- The coach/team assists congregational leaders on how to introduce the idea of completion to the congregation

- A final congregational vote is taken authorizing the journey towards congregational completion.

## **Step 2:** Development of a Post Completion Plan

- A legacy team (the appointed trustees) is formed to determine which of the following options will be pursued:
  1. The congregation will close and members will find a new congregational home of their choosing;
  2. The congregation will merge with an existing congregation;
  3. The congregation will close and a church plant will arise in the present location utilizing the resources available from the financial legacy of the congregation.

## **Step 3:** Assignment of Completion Tasks to Three Distinct Teams

### **THE PASTORAL & CELEBRATION TEAM**

- Task 1: Pastoral Care
  - Pastoral care will visit all shut-ins and various other members for whom completion will be difficult in order to share the vision for completion, hear and collect stories and listen to any concerns.

- Pastoral care will also make provision for the pastor and/or key staff to be cared for in the transition and facilitate the transfer of ministerial credentials as may be necessary.
- Task 2: Membership Oversight
  - Membership care determines the active membership list and where memberships will transfer based on the decision describe in Step 2 above.
  - This team will work with a receiving congregation to provide information about members transferring in and determine the best way for the receiving congregation to provide care for the new members as is deemed necessary.
- Task 3: Celebration Events
  - Celebration Events develops plans for final celebrative gatherings and a final worship service that highlight stories from the congregation's history and provide opportunity for congregants to reminisce, celebrate and complete the journey well.
  - To the extent possible, former pastors, missionaries and key congregational

leaders are invited to return and participate in these events.

## **THE LEGAL & PROPERTY TEAM**

- Task 1: Official Documents
  - Legal processes all necessary documents for dissolving the church as a corporation
  - Legal will identify attorneys, realtors, accountants and church parliamentarians to assist with details related to closing.
  - Articles of incorporation will be reviewed to determine congregational obligations
  
- Task 2: Finances and Assets
  - A review of finances and assets will be made to determine the net-value of the congregation.
  - Legal determines the best disposition of the property
  - Legal drafts a final report to the trustees and classis highlighting: intention to close, date of closing, church partners, membership transfers, intention for disposition of assets, the final legacy plan and the individual or team that will bear responsibility to bring all the above to completion.

- Task 3: History and Records
  - History/Records gathers important congregational records (minutes, historic books, membership files, etc.) along with various congregational artifacts and determines how those items can be preserved for future generations. Assistance will be sought through Heritage Hall at Calvin College.
- Task 4: Building Content
  - Inventory all content inside the building and determine who should be the recipient of the content
  - Sell or distribute all building content prior to the completion day

## **THE ASSETS & LEGACY TEAM**

- Task 1: A “blessing plan”
  - The Assets and Legacy will determine the best “blessing plan” to bring Gospel life by sharing remaining assets with organizations committed to the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom. The blessing plan will demand determining how to support a merged ministry, conversations with classis, receiving of letters of request, interviews with potential fund recipients, etc.

- The plan will be presented to the congregation for their approval.
- Task 2: Summary keepsake
  - A final summary memory booklet will be created that tells the story of the congregation's ministry together and names how the assets of the congregation were shared to bring new life.

#### **Step 4:** A Legacy Council Meets Regularly

- A Legacy Council consisting of persons/teams responsible for the above tasks will meet regularly with the trustees to coordinate progress, discuss overlapping responsibilities and set in motion a time table with specific target dates for the completion of the congregation's journey.

#### **Step 5:** Completion

- The process of completion takes place following a final worship service, the transfer of all memberships, the dispossession of all assets and the distribution of gifts in accordance with the legacy plan.
- An authorized team or an authorized individual bring all things to a close.
- A final report of closure is drafted and sent to members, the church's governing body, the classis/

denomination and governmental agencies to indicate the completion of the congregation's journey

## **The Role of the Renewal Legacy Project**

The Renewal Legacy Project will provide a coach or team to work with a congregation's leadership team to guarantee that the above tasks are accomplished in a thoughtful, sensitive and proper way.

The process of completing a congregation's journey generally takes 6-24 months. The coach remains with the congregation through this process.

CONTACT INFO

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