

The multifaith campus

By [L. Gail Irwin](#)

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I've written elsewhere about [Springhouse Ministry](#), a church building shared by three congregations of different denominations in south Minneapolis. [Here is a story](#) about three congregations of different *faiths* that are now sharing space on Long Island.

In both these cases (and in one I experienced where a largely white Presbyterian church shared our building with an evangelical Hmong congregation), sharing the use of a building can lead to other types of sharing. The Long Island congregations are celebrating Thanksgiving by having each clergy leader preach on a text from another's tradition. The Springhouse churches share Sunday school programming and some mission projects, although they worship separately. In my former church, we gathered for a class on Hmong culture and occasionally shared worship and Hmong/American New Year celebrations.

On one level, this new sharing excites the imagination: a greater unity is being pursued among the faiths! On closer inspection, this kind of sharing may present challenges ranging from who owns what "stuff" (talk to your insurance company before your new partner moves in) to theological differences (what if the church we share our building with is protesting abortion and we are pro-choice?). For many people of faith, there is still distrust lurking in the shadows. Can we all really be just "one happy household"?

The pressures faced by local churches these days are leading to some strange bedfellows partnering for new mission ventures. I find that exciting. I wonder how God feels about it.

Thanks to Joe Duggan at [Congregational Seasons](#) for sharing this story.

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