



PLACEMENT PROFILE

SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 **Placement Name(s):** Congregational Minister
- 1.2 **Please list congregations/agencies names below**
South Camberwell Uniting Church Gospel Hall
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- 1.3 **Profile approved by Church Council/Governing Body** 09 / 08 / 2020
- 1.4 **Primary purpose of placement:**
To minister to a multicultural (mainly Chinese) congregation, which includes preaching and pastoral care; the specifics are provided in section 6.4.
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- 1.5 **Suitable for (bold all that apply): Minister of the Word / Deacon / Ordinand/ Pastor**
- 1.6 **Time fraction:** 80 %
- 1.7 **Term:**
Undefined up to 10 years (See Reg 2.7.3(a)) Yes
Fixed Term: _____
Initial Term reviewed in: _____

This profile should be prepared by the Congregation(s)/ agency in consultation with Presbytery. It is specifically designed to assist in the placement process but it can also be used as a record of mission planning.

Contents

Section 1: Basic Information

Section 2: Mission Direction

Section 3: Context

Section 4: People and Activities – to be completed by each congregation in the placement.

Section 5: Joint Congregations – to be completed if more than one congregation in the placement.

Section 6: Working Relationships

Section 7: New Minister – this section contains a list of mission and pastoral activities which are also listed on Minister's Personal profiles

Section 9: Presbytery – to be completed by Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee.

Section 10: Terms of Placement

ENCLOSURES

Please mark all the documents attached to the profile:

- Floor plan of residence
- Financial information including a copy of last year's Financial Statement and financial projections
- Position descriptions of relevant ministers
- Others

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

2.1 What is the Vision statement and or Mission priorities of the placement (or of the individual congregations)

Mission priorities

- To realise our vision: 'Love God, Love People, Make Disciples'
- To unify the congregation (Chinese speaking and English speaking) in Christ
- To grow the church, with a focus on younger people
- To develop ways of bringing Christ to the local community

2.2 Date adopted 13/10/2019

2.3 Provide a short description of the placement/congregation(s)

- The congregation is a multi-cultural one, predominantly Chinese, whose members are mostly in the older age bracket. There are few young people.
- The congregation sees itself as one that:
 - views scripture and the gospel of Jesus Christ as its foundation
 - is friendly and welcoming
 - has members who care about and help each other
 - places a high value on bible study, cell groups and table fellowship
 - has effective Sunday School (SS) teachers and an appropriate SS curriculum

2.4 How has the placement/congregation(s) changed over the last 5 years?

- The last three years have been difficult for the congregation. Previously, it had a minister and a pastor, both full-time. The pastor served the needs of members of the English worship service. When the pastor left without notice three years ago, the English service attendance, which had included a large youth contingent, declined significantly; this was reflected to some extent in attendance at the Chinese service.
- Since the departure of the pastor, attempts have been made to continue and grow the English service. Visiting preachers were used in the interim. Following a two-year trial period with mixed results, it was decided to merge the Chinese and English services and to review the situation at the end of March 2020; this review has been deferred in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The downturn in overall attendance has presented financial difficulties for the congregation; these have been overcome partly by increased hiring of the church/hall, mainly to a non-UCA Chinese congregation. This action, coupled with a reduction in the placement from two full-time ministers/pastors to one .8 minister, should allow the congregation to be financially sustainable.
- During the last three years, the congregation has maintained its bible study groups, continued to build its Sunday School, and enjoyed a number of activities such as cooking lessons, table tennis, celebrations for the Mooncake Festival and the Dragon Boat Festival. All activities include a spiritual dimension, and are open to non-members.
- Much of the three-year period has been taken up with unifying and healing the congregation, to the detriment of any focus on outside mission. That said, the congregation remains committed to bringing to Christ any attendees who are not yet baptized, and encourages individual members to share the gospel message with non-believers, friends, relatives, neighbours.
- With the guidance of Rev SweeAnn Koh during recent years, the congregation has developed an enhanced understanding of UCA polity and values. His occasional preaching has also helped with the healing process necessitated by the fall-out. He has helped us to draw important lessons from our experience of what happened and why, while providing appropriate spiritual and emotional support and encouraging members to move forward and not dwell on the past.

2.5 What are the congregation(s)/placement goals?

- As indicated in 2.4 above, in recent years one of the primary targets has been to unify the congregation; this was necessary because, until three years ago, the English and Chinese service members were treated as more-or-less separate congregations; this process is ongoing.
 - The congregation's aim is to grow the church by engaging in mission and evangelism with Chinese people, particularly with students. We seek to rebuild the youth group and further revitalise the Children Sunday School.
 - We also hope to re-establish the English worship service in the future.
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2.6 What are the next Strategic Steps to achieving those goals?

- The next Strategic Steps are to:
 - Strengthen the spiritual growth of members through application of the Word with bible study and discipleship training, which will also serve to equip them for mission activities.
 - Develop outreach activities/worship eg. evangelical meetings.
 - Review the traditional format of worship services to see whether it meets contemporary and future needs. Assist the congregation in understanding the true meaning of worship.
 - Explore possible ways of working with the Zion Church (see section 5.1) on shared mission activities
 - Explore the possibility of developing a relationship with another UCA congregation that is keen to have a mission to Chinese people.
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SECTION 3 – CONTEXT

3.1 Describe the communities in which this placement is located (Mission context).

- The church is located in the inner south-eastern suburbs, in the City of Boroondara, which has a population of around 186,000 (2016). Within the city, the church sits in the suburb of South Camberwell, adjacent to Glen Iris and Hawthorn East.
- Boroondara is generally an affluent area, with 43% of households reporting a weekly income that falls into the top quartile for Victoria (\$2,395 and over). However, 8.4% of households have a household income less than \$400 per week (5.2% or 820 households in Glen Iris), and 17% of households have a weekly income of less than \$740, the lowest quartile for Victoria.
- In the vicinity of the church, approximately 270 houses were replaced by 957 medium/high density dwellings between 2006 and 2016. Seventy per cent of dwellings in Glen Iris are separate houses.
- There were 25,511 actively trading businesses in Boroondara at June 2017 (ABS).
- The crime rate in Boroondara is low compared to Victoria and the Eastern Metropolitan region. In 2016-17, there were 4,714 offences in Boroondara, compared with 5,716 in the Eastern Metropolitan region, and 8,596 in Victoria. In Boroondara these offences constituted: violence (485), crimes against property (3,437), drug offences (214), public order and security offences (213), justice procedures offences, other offences (10).

3.2 How does your congregation reflect or vary from the age, and ethnic mix of your local community?

- In the City of Boroondara, at the time of the 2016 national census:
 - 30.9% of residents were born overseas, and 24% of residents have non-English speaking backgrounds. In the 20-39 age group, 36% of residents were Chinese born. Seventy-seven per cent of Chinese language speakers (Cantonese or Mandarin) report that they speak English 'well' or 'very well'.
 - 45.9% of residents identify as Christian, a 17% decrease over the previous five years. The decrease is more pronounced for the age group 20-29 years.
 - Nearly three-quarters of residents believe that multi-culturalism makes life in the area better.
 - 3.8% of residents (2,483 males, 3,920 females) required assistance with core activities due to severe or profound disability.
 - The main industry for residents in paid work is the professional, scientific and technical services industry (15.6%), followed by health care and social assistance (14.8%), and education and training (10.9%), retail trade (9.8%), and financial and insurance services (7.3%).
- Our congregation:
 - has a greater percentage of older people than the local community
 - has a much higher percentage of people born in China/Hong Kong
 - is possibly on a par with Chinese language speakers in the local community in terms of mastery of the English language.

3.3 What are the opportunities and points of stress and pain in the wider community?

- Opportunities:
 - There is clearly much work to be done to arrest the decline in the numbers identifying as Christian, especially the young. Ways need to be found to target the latter group.
 - As a high percentage of Chinese speakers have a good command of the English language, this suggests that it would be worthwhile putting effort into re-establishing the English service. Children born in Australia will of course be English speaking.

- Given the number of retirement villages/homes in the area (see 3.5), and the fact that about one-third of elderly people in the local community live alone in a separate house (2016 census), a visitation program designed to address loneliness could be considered.

- **Points of stress and pain in the wider community:**

- Social isolation among the elderly is a problem, with some people lacking family support during the daytime, and many being widowed. Their well-being and mental health need to be enhanced.
- In 2016, 426 residents were homeless; this figure is believed to be understated. Of this figure, 56 were living in supported accommodation for the homeless, 250 in boarding houses, and 87 in 'severely' crowded dwellings.
- The city has very low numbers of social housing stock, representing approximately 1.1% of all Boroondara dwellings. As a result, there are extensive waiting lists for social housing.

- Over the last 10 years, Boroondara has shown a steady increase in family violence incidents, with a large increase between 2011 and 2013, based on family violence reports per 100,000 residents.
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3.4 List ways in which you connect with, serve, or partner with people in your wider community?

Sadly, the changed circumstances of our church over the last three years has meant a significant reduction in our interaction with the wider community, to the point that it is now minimal. We no longer visit nursing homes, for example, or collaborate with local churches to offer Christmas Carols in the Park. Our lay leaders, despite being few in number, have been actively carrying out various ministries, including worship, pastoral care, and outreach. We feel excited about our missional direction in outreaching to the Chinese community, including overseas Chinese students. Further cooperation with local churches, ecumenical or otherwise, is also part of our plan (see Section 5 for comment concerning the Zion Church, which hires our chapel and hall on an ongoing basis). A Minister could provide essential leadership, as our lay leaders are keen to work closely together with the Minister in carrying out the above outreach ministries.

We have some links with Uniting Church Gospel Hall, Melbourne sharing their online services during the coronavirus lockdown. Some of their members attend our Bible study fellowship (Thursday morning). Their organist also helps us out once every month. We also attend their services on special occasions like anniversaries.

3.5 What schools/agencies/institutions are in your local community?

There are 30 hostels for the disabled, 29 retirement homes/villages, 16 nursing homes, 12 boarding houses, 12 convents/monasteries, 9 boarding schools, 7 hotels/motels, 7 private hospitals (not psychiatric), 6 public hospitals (no psychiatric), 3 residential colleges/halls of residence, and 3 psychiatric hospitals or institutions.
