



## PLACEMENT PROFILE

### SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 Placement Name(s): Alphington Fairfield Uniting Church
- 1.2 Please list congregations/agencies names below  
● Alphington Fairfield Uniting Church
- 1.3 Profile approved by Church Council/Governing Body 25 / 01 / 2022
- 1.4 Primary purpose of placement:  
Replacement of current minister who has accepted another call
- 1.5 Suitable for (bold all that apply): **Minister of the Word**
- 1.6 Time fraction: 100 %
- 1.7 Term:  
Undefined up to 10 years (See Reg 2.7.3(a)) X  
Fixed Term: \_\_\_\_\_ Years  
Initial Term reviewed in: \_\_\_\_\_ Years

### SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

- 2.1
- What is the Vision statement and or Mission priorities of the placement (or of the individual congregations)**
- Continuing participatory worship that is accessible to all ages.
  - Providing pastoral care networks for support of members and associates.
  - Addressing justice and environmental issues.
  - Continuing and developing depth in 'progressive theology'.
  - Being an open and inclusive community in terms of age, race, sexuality.
  - A deepening engagement with the local community and reaching out to groups via Gateway op-shop and Coracle – see attachment
- 2.2 Date adopted 25/01/2022

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

- St Andrew's is a lively congregation that has flourished under the leadership of the previous minister.
- It is a blend of 'stalwarts' who have been part of the congregation for a long time and people who have joined in recent years.
- It is a mixed-age congregation with an average attendance at Sunday worship before COVID of 75, overwhelmingly Anglo culturally.
- The congregation has a clear sense of its identity, describing itself as progressive theologically and socially.

### 2.4 What Church Style best describes the congregation(s)? (See [Church Style](#) document)

The theological style prior to the last settlement is clearly defined by the attached paper A Just Church. Over the last 9-10 years our congregation has further developed these themes by embracing Progressive Theology. This emphasis has, of course influenced the life of our congregation and community. Many have been attracted to our community because of both the style of leadership and its content. When talking with Presbytery about this they have asked what we mean by Progressive Theology. The following is an attempt to place the views of our congregation on paper. It is shaped from an extraction from Wikipedia's definition of Progressive Christianity.

Theologically Progressive Christianity is an approach to the Christian faith that is influenced by post-liberalism and postmodernism and:

- proclaims Jesus of Nazareth as Christ, Saviour, and Friend,
- emphasizes the Way and teachings of Jesus, not merely His person;
- emphasizes God's immanence not merely God's transcendence;
- leans toward [panentheism](#) rather than supernatural theism;
- emphasizes salvation here and now instead of primarily in heaven later;
- emphasizes being saved for robust, abundant/eternal life over being saved from hell;
- emphasizes the social/communal aspects of salvation instead of merely the personal;
- stresses social justice as integral to Christian discipleship; takes the Bible seriously but not necessarily literally, embracing a more interpretive, metaphorical understanding;
- emphasizes orthopraxy instead of orthodoxy (right actions over right beliefs);
- embraces reason as well as paradox and mystery — instead of blind allegiance to rigid doctrines and dogmas;
- does not consider homosexuality to be sinful;
- and does not claim that Christianity is the only valid or viable way to connect to God (is non-exclusive).

It is hoped that any new appointment would further develop our theological journey.

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

- In the last five years there has been an increase in young adults (20s & 30s).
- There has been a physical opening to the community with rainbow-painted steps, large windows used as an art space and an outdoor stage.
- The impact of COVID over the past two years has severely restricted face-to-face worship but has created new opportunities via ZOOM and pre-recorded services.
- Twelve months ago Uniting decided it would no longer be running the kindergarten that had been part of the space for more than thirty years. There was a negative financial impact initially but it opened up opportunities for community use of the space.

### 2.6 What are the congregation(s)/placement's goals?

- To provide leadership and direction to the congregation to fulfill its goals and priorities as stated above.

- To provide leadership of the worship life of the congregation with the emphasis as described, namely, progressive and justice and community focussed theology, participatory and all-age inclusive.
- To provide leadership of the pastoral care ministry within the congregation.

**2.7 What are the next Strategic Steps to achieving those goals?**

- As the congregation learns to 'live with COVID' there are openings to liaise with community groups looking to access available spaces (Coracle).
- Face-to-face worship may not be possible for some older and/or more vulnerable members so plans are in place for alternatives e.g. online Meditation and Poetry sessions will be resuming shortly.

## SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

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

- Fairfield has a mix of young professionals (singles and couples) and long term residents.
- In recent years housing stock has become very expensive
- A recent impetus is new apartment dwellings with environmental emphasis.
- A developing community is taking shape on the old AMCOR site, 16.5 hectares, 2500 homes and a whole new suburb of 5000 people. Is this an opportunity for outreach?
- As well as the young professionals, there are also vulnerable people in need of support who have suffered during COVID.

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

- The multi-age congregation mirrors the community, but is not as ethnically diverse.

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

- The opportunities for the wider community are restoring links that have been deferred during COVID.
- The creation of a whole new suburb of 5000 people is an enormous opportunity.

The points of stress and pain are the issues of loneliness made worse by COVID.

### 3.4 List ways in which you connect with, serve, or partner with people in your wider community?

- Apart from weekly worship the church provides a peaceful space in the garden, books in the little book library.
- As restrictions ease more community groups will be wanting to access the spaces available (Church, hall, previous kinder space and kinder garden).
- The Gateway op-shop has been running for over twenty years and provides a chance for a bargain as well as popping in for a chat.
- Church members are involved in environmental groups, social justice

### 3.5 What schools/agencies/institutions are in your local communities?

There are four primary schools in the local area

There is one Independent, co-educational secondary school, Alphington Grammar School