



A Placement Profile

A1 Presbytery	Port Phillip East Presbytery
A2 Name of Placement	Stonnington Community Uniting Church ("SCUC")
A3 Placement city/suburb/town	Malvern East, Vic 3145
A4 Church/Office location(s)	Ewing Memorial Centre, 57-59 Burke Rd, Malvern East ("EMC")
A5 Congregations and agencies associated with this placement	Stonnington Community UC Congregation

A6 Ministry leadership being sought	Specific ministry role:	Congregation Minister	
	Minister of the Word <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deacon <input type="checkbox"/>	Ministry of Pastor <input type="checkbox"/>
	Ordinand <input type="checkbox"/>		

A7 Specific details	Additional placement <input type="checkbox"/>	Replacement placement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Full Time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/>	Time fraction <input type="text" value="1.0"/>
	Earliest Start Date: Immediate	Click here to enter a date.

A8 Placement term	Undefined <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Up to 10 years (see Reg 2.7.3(a))	
	Fixed Term	Required for non-congregational placements (see Reg 2.7.3(b))
		Years <input type="text"/>

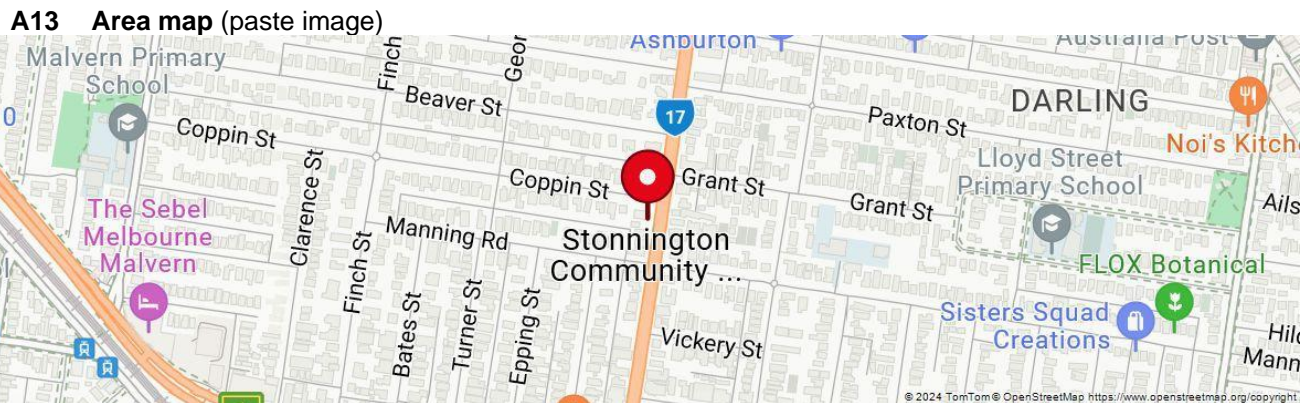
A9 To be completed by Presbytery, with reasons given on page :

Is permission sought to advertise?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is a Priority Placement recommended?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

A10 Website	www.ewing.org.au
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A11 Social Media	Our Facebook page is currently being rebuilt.
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A12 Google map link	59 Burke Rd, Malvern East, Vic 3145
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B The Congregation

B1 Tell a potential minister about this placement and yourselves, in your own words and pictures, in no more than one page. Share something of your congregation's values, beliefs and ways in which you live out and share the gospel message.

Include comment about why you need a new minister. How will this placement be exciting, challenging, and attractive to a minister? How can God be served in new ways here? What do you want the Minister to do with you and for you?

This is your chance to 'be creative' and catch the attention of someone who is thinking of sharing their call, their gifts, their life with you.

SCUC is a vibrant faith community, and, while we are an older congregation, we see ourselves as being still on a spiritual journey. The SCUC community embraces diversity and is open to experimentation and the testing of new ideas and approaches. Over the last two decades the underpinnings of our worship have shifted towards a progressive theology. Rather than treating the New or Old Testaments as the literal truth, we seek to understand them as providing, through a rich vein of metaphor and parable, a deep understanding of Jesus' message. We take account of the cultural and political context in which Jesus lived in order to apply his message of God's Kingdom on Earth to our very different modern world.

Our members are more inclined to acknowledge God as a mystery, all pervasive in our lives and throughout the Cosmos, rather than as a remote, interventionist Being or Deity. However, the beliefs of SCUC members are varied, with some members not feeling as 'progressive' as others but their views are acknowledged and respected. Thus, our aim to be inclusive of all should enable all members of the congregation to enjoy the style and order of the Sunday service, particularly in celebrating the old traditions associated with occasions such as Christmas and Easter, and our celebration of the Eucharist.

Congregation members have played a leading role in the founding of the Progressive Christian Network of Victoria (PCNV) and in establishing and conducting several "Common Dreams" conferences. The congregation continues to provide administrative support for the PCNV and Common Dreams.

Our purpose is to seek, through our community's fellowship and faith, an enhancement of our individual lives, and through those lives, the lives of the wider community. That "life enhancement" is reflected in the caring we receive and the caring we give, in our capacity to love more and to be loved, and in our assured progression through life with the spiritual comfort of the Holy Spirit within us.

Our vision is to create a spiritual home for a secular people through which we can secure, perpetuate and grow this "life enhancement" opportunity, extending the SCUC faith community (and its purpose) deeper and wider with people from all walks of life who live, study, or work in the broader East Malvern area and surrounds, or who come from further afield to experience the progressive theology espoused by SCUC.

SCUC is a safe place for all people to attend, regardless of ethnicity, creed, gender, cultural background, or sexual orientation. We warmly welcome visitors and new members.

We aim to be a listening church and regard ourselves as being non-judgemental, sympathetic, and compassionate. We strive to be a helping church, supporting each other, helping the community, working for the disadvantaged, seeking social justice and caring for the environment. There are strong friendships within our community and we can look to each other for support. Pastoral care is seen as a high priority in this community of older members.

Our church services do have structure, but we have long abandoned the traditional church service, with its formal seating and preaching format. Many members have expressed their love and respect for some of the traditional aspects of church services, including hymns, prayers and Bible readings, but they also value not being restricted by conventional forms of worship/liturgy. Over a number of years we have become accustomed to more interactive services, with seating in the round and more flexibility in the choice of readings, poetry and other references from a wide variety of other wisdom sources.

Music plays an important role in our ministry. We have an excellent organ and grand piano and we engage capable organists and pianists; congregation members make up a regular choir and, together with friends, a regular musical ensemble, both of which perform monthly or for special services. Often, our hymns have replaced older, and theologically contentious words with modern, more appropriate words (though for some, the older words still have a nostalgic appeal).

Members wish to be enlightened and challenged by the ideas presented during the service. They hope to be engaged by the minister's reflections and to find them relevant to today's world. Members seek to be inspired and uplifted by the service and by the company of people whom they trust and respect; to feel the "togetherness of community". Some speak of the perception of being cleansed, grounded or soothed, and of feeling a sense of dignity, of being in a special place on Sunday morning.

Members of our congregation are very enthusiastic about the wider life of SCUC. We meet for morning tea after our services and we lunch in our Parish Hall on the first Sunday of the month following the Communion service and all these occasions are valued. Many members engage positively in our other associated activities: 'Something for the Spirit', a more widely based discussion group which meets on a monthly basis; Book Chat, a book discussion group meeting several times a year; our monthly church newsletter, InSpire; Common Threads, a 'secular' craft circle which meets monthly; UCAF, known as "Afternoon Fellowship", which meets monthly; the Library, which is maintained by a small group of members; an informal monthly social get-together at a local coffee shop.

These activities help to form strong bonds of friendship between members of the congregation and develop a warm sense of community. Members care for one another and reach out to each other, and lifelong friendships have developed over many years. There is a strong commitment to refugees, inter-faith groups, First Nations peoples and to social justice issues and several members of the congregation are actively involved in organisations supporting these causes. Members stress the need for the SCUC's continued support for humanitarian organisations and causes.

In spite of being an aging group, members seek new opportunities for significant outreach to the local community; in the future, they hope for a stronger footprint in the community.

In pondering the future, members hope that SCUC can maintain our membership or even achieve modest growth in it, and they have expressed the hope that we can keep functioning as a church. Members hope we can continue to explore our progressive Christian journey and appeal to the 'spiritual but not religious' people in our community. Members emphasise the continuing need for pastoral care directed at those undergoing significant life changes within our ageing congregation.

B2 List and explain any particular priorities which the congregation has identified and which it will address in the next two to five years?

To identify at least one major opportunity for outreach to the local community.

**B3 Does this placement relate to more than one congregation?
If so, provide details on page .**

Yes No

**B4 What ethnic and language groups are represented in the congregation?
What proportion of the congregation does each represent?**

Anglo-Australian English speakers >95%.
Asian Australian English speakers <5%.

B5 What languages are spoken in the life of your:

Congregation, by		Community, by	
Individuals	English	Individuals	English for communicating in public.
Groups	English	Groups	English and various Asian and European languages when at home or in ethnic gatherings

B6 What languages are spoken by the congregation in worship?

English only.



B7 Describe any involvement your congregation has in covenanting activities.

The congregation has no active covenanting relationship with UAICC.

We see potential to engage more closely with "Reconciliation Stonnington", a community group which has been actively promoting awareness of indigenous issues and more participation in the reconciliation movement for over twenty years.

We do acknowledge the Wurundjeri Peoples' traditional ownership of country in Sunday services, on signage, formal correspondence, and documents. Congregation members, individually and in groups, participate in public displays of support for First Peoples' causes.

B8 List any UCA Schools and/or agencies (Uniting VicTas, Uniting AgeWell) with which the congregation has an existing relationship.

Uniting Vic/Tas Prahran (volunteering and weekly offerings of food and other goods to the food bank)

C Mission

C1 List three of your missional activities that your congregation does best?

1. Pastoral care of the congregation members.
2. Engagement with action on social justice issues (especially refugees and asylum seekers and First Peoples causes). The congregation is sympathetic to the circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers. It supports the Higgins Grandmothers for Refugees support group and several members are leaders of this group. Weekly food and dry goods offerings are collected for the Asylum /Seekers Resource Centre.
3. A variety of groups that provide opportunities for fellowship beyond the active church members, such as the Common Threads craft group.

C2 What are three missional activities your congregation would like to develop?

The congregation feels it is capable of taking on a further missional activity that would identify one major opportunity for outreach to the local community. This aspiration has yet to be defined but the prospect of a concerted effort to engage with the lonely, grieving, or shut in people in the area surrounding the church has been flagged as a possibility.

SCUC is well-positioned to reach out to other Uniting Churches nearby, such as the Korean Church of Melbourne (Glendearg Grove), the Indonesian UC Church (St Andrew's Gardiner), and, especially, the Tamil UC Congregation (for which we provide a home at our Malvern East Uniting Centre in Serrell Street). Although these congregations may be linguistically different and have more conservative theology than us, because of their broader age profile we envisage fruitful collaboration opportunities in community outreach, and shared non-worship activities such as music, book club and craft group. This would broaden the scope of our activities and enrich our church life.

Another aspiration is to hold occasional public forums on social issues such as homelessness that would seek to engage community interest beyond the congregation. This would also be pitched at neighbouring churches and would seek collaboration with the City of Stonnington.

Homelessness is already the focus of much of the output of Common Threads, whose members knit and assemble blankets for KOGO, who distribute them to a wide number of charities, especially those for the homeless.

C3 How has the congregation changed in the past two years?

There has been little perceptible change in the past two years.

C4 What changes and developments are anticipated in the next three to five years?

No major changes or developments are expected in the next three to five years.

D The Community

D1 Describe the wider community in which your ministry is located.

The Malvern East locality (the smallest area for which statistics are available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [ABS] 2021) census extends between Tooronga Road to the west and Warrigal Road to the east, Wattletree Road and the Monash Highway to the north and the Princes Highway to the South. SCUC is situated towards the western end of this area. The following commentary on the population of the area closer to SCUC therefore assumes that it is similar to the wider community of Malvern East. This description uses broad figures to make for simpler reading and seeks to highlight what seem to be the more significant features of this area's population. Overall, the population of Malvern East has a wide diversity, with the following features. Less than one third of residents were, in 2021, under 25 years age, about 17% were over 65. Of those over 15 years of age, about 42% were then not married and about 5% were widowed.

The median age was 38 (c/f 77 for the congregation). Religious affiliation showed "No Religion" 39.6% as easily the largest group responding, followed by Catholic 21.6%, Anglican 8.8%, Eastern Orthodox 7.5%. UCA responders appear to have been too small a group to be reported separately.

Cultural backgrounds vary, with about half of the population having one or both parents born overseas and almost one third of households speaking a language other than English at home, predominantly an Asian language. The Australian Aboriginal population was about 1%.

Of families, half had children at home; about 12% were single parent families with the majority of the single parents being women (80%). Of families with two parents at home, about one quarter had both parents in full time employment.

The locality is dominated by detached or 'independent' dwellings which make up about three quarters of all dwellings, the remainder being a variety of flats or apartments. About 30% of occupied dwellings were rented.

Over a third (about 40%) of those employed had higher levels of education and about the same proportion were employed as professionals or managers. Some two-thirds of the population were 'in the labour force', with unemployment in 2021 recorded as 5%. The population is generally well remunerated. Median weekly household income is \$2,386 (c/f all Victoria \$1,759).

Regarding health, about a quarter of the population was reported as having one or more long-term health conditions.

As a qualification to the above, we surmise that the description of cultural diversity does not apply consistently across Malvern East, but observation suggests there is greater diversity to the east and greater cultural homogeneity to the west.

D2 What makes this an enjoyable place to live?

East Malvern is what is popularly described in media commentaries as a "leafy green inner suburban area". The SCUC church and manse are located in the Gascoigne Estate precinct which is described by the Victorian Heritage Council as being of regional significance as a substantial and important example of Federation and inter-war suburban development in Melbourne. The overall character of the area, a mature Federation and inter-war area with broad tree-lined streets has for many years been seen as quintessential Malvern. The area's associations with Central Park are contributory to its significance.

There is good access to public transport. Trams (routes 3 and 5) and trains (Caulfield Station on the Pakenham, Cranbourne, and Frankston Lines) are all within practical walking distance.


Educational facilities nearby are excellent. There are many day-care centres and sessional kindergartens available (including two conducted by well-run not-for-profit groups in church owned premises); two excellent state primary schools are quite close; and the Caulfield campus of Monash University is also easily accessed. While there are many private secondary schools in the area, unfortunately, there are no state secondary schools in the whole of the Stonnington LGA other than the selective entry Melbourne High School for boys in South Yarra. The nearest reasonably accessible high schools are Glen Eira College (to the south, in the Glen Eira LGA) and Auburn High School (to the north, in the Boroondara LGA).

There is a good choice of supermarkets available close by and the Glenferrie Road shopping strip and Malvern Central shopping centre is good for other general requirements. Koornang Road Carnegie is a vibrant multi-cultural precinct with four supermarkets and many restaurants. Somewhat further afield is the huge Chadstone Shopping Centre.

D3 What are the points of stress and pain in the wider community?

Family stress (families juggling to balance work and family pressures. We suspect there may be an unseen degree of financial stress due to cost of living increases, especially for those heavily burdened with mortgage debt in what is an area where house prices are elevated - the median house price is \$2.1 million).

Loneliness and isolation (e.g. aged persons with little or no family support, grieving survivors after the loss of a life partner, folk who are shut in because of limited physical mobility)



International students at Monash University Caulfield

Homelessness is visible lately in the busy shopping areas of Glenferrie Road, Malvern and Koornang Road, Carnegie.

D4 How closely does your congregation reflect the demographics of your local area?

Not closely - the congregation is considerably older (median age 77) than the surrounding community (median age 39) and it is not as ethnically diverse.

In addition, quite a few members travel some distance from outside the area to attend SCUC. Some of these have historical ties from childhood or youth and want to retain the connection; others are attracted by the progressive theology that underpins our services and general outlook.

D5 What community facilities are present in the local area?

The local area is very well endowed with community facilities. Examples are:
Malvern Theatre Company, Jazz Centre, Australian Academy of Dance among others in the field of performing arts.
Yamaha Music School.
Kumon Education Centres
Harold Holt Swim Centre
Phoenix Park Community Centre
Malvern & Phoenix Park Libraries; Malvern Historical Society and the Stonnington History Centre
MECWA aged care facilities (which has historical links to the SCUC congregation)
Gardiner Lodge (operated by Uniting Vic/Tas)
Exceptional green spaces including Central Park, Malvern Public Gardens (Spring Road), Caulfield Park, Hedgeley Dene Gardens, and Percy Treyvaud Memorial Park (which has extensive sporting facilities).
Malvern Valley Golf Course
Monash University Caulfield Campus
Homesglen TAFE
Two fine State Primary Schools
Many not-for-profit and commercial child care centres and sessional kindergartens
Cabrini Hospital