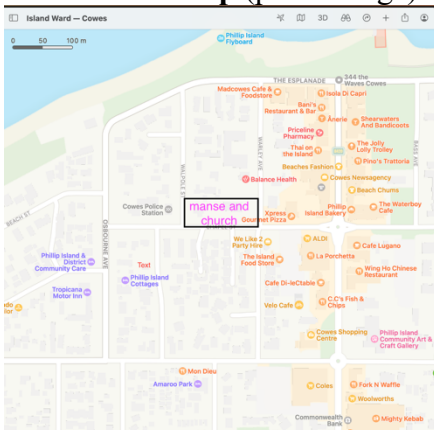




A Placement Profile

A1 Presbytery	Gippsland Presbytery		
A2 Name of Placement	St John's UCA, Cowes		
A3 Placement city/suburb/town	Cowes		
A4 Church/Office location(s)	80 Chapel St, Cowes 3922		
A5 Congregations and agencies associated with this placement	Cowes		
A6 Ministry leadership being sought	Specific ministry role:	Minister	
	Minister of the Word ✓	Ordinand ✓	Deacon ✓ Pastor ✓
A7 Specific details	Additional placement <input type="checkbox"/>	Replacement placement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Full Time ✓	Part Time <input type="checkbox"/>	Time fraction <input type="text" value="1"/>
	Earliest Start Date:	Immediate ✓	OR Click here to enter a date.
A8 Placement term	Undefined ✓	Up to 10 years (see Reg 2.7.3(a))	
	Fixed Term <input type="checkbox"/>	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 12:	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	http://www.cowes.unitingchurch.org.au/		
A11 Social Media	Facebook: St John's Uniting Church		
A12 Google map link	https://maps.app.goo.gl/256VdYFsVxYoV1eh8		

A13 Area map (paste image)



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.

About St John's: St John's is a warm, informal congregation that draws people from a range of denominational and theological backgrounds, united by a shared commitment to worship, service, and mutual care. Many members are actively involved in the worship and mission life of the church, contributing according to their gifts and capacities.

The congregation includes approximately 95 members across 75 families and regularly welcomes visitors who enrich worship life, particularly during holiday seasons. At present, the majority of the local congregation (92%) are over 60 years of age, with 41% being over 80.


Currently most regular members live on Phillip Island, with 87.5% living in Cowes and Ventnor, 3% in Rhyll, 4% in Cape Woolamai, 1% in Newhaven and 4.5% off the Island. 8 members are residents of Aged Care facilities.

The church has an established connection with a similar number of families that we refer to as 'Shearwaters' (after the migratory seabird that regularly returns to the island). These holiday homeowners and other regular visitors to Phillip Island bring children and younger adults into the life of the congregation and add diversity and energy to worship.

Mission and Community Engagement: The existing congregation for many years has instigated and continues to inspire and support significant community facing ministry and mission. Some current examples being:

- a weekly community meal and food distribution, serving between 60 and 90 people each week. This ministry is cooked, organised, and staffed by congregation members alongside community volunteers, and is a significant expression of hospitality and justice.
- Kids Hope mentoring at Newhaven Primary School
- Active participation in the Winter Shelter program in collaboration with local churches through the Inter-Church Council
- A close working relationship with the neighbouring community house (PICAL)
- An ongoing alliance with Rural Australians for Refugees, including food collection and advocacy

A recently refurbished multipurpose space (formerly a shed) offers exciting potential for new and emerging forms of mission and outreach. By making its buildings available, St John's hosts educational and cultural activities such as concerts, festivals, and community forums. The hall is regularly used by community and commercial groups, including a weekly Bass Coast Health playgroup.



Worship Life: Worship is currently offered each Sunday at two services: 8.45am – a contemplative service and 10.15am – a traditional service (average attendance around 45). One of the missional priorities identified is establishing an expression of worship that will attract and nourish a younger demographic, bearing in mind that currently less than 10% are under 60 years of age.

An online service is also streamed via Facebook each weekend. While the 10.15am service is traditional in structure, the congregation is open, curious, and willing to engage creatively—through discussion, shared reflection, music, visual media, drama, flexible seating, and participatory worship practices. A minister with creative gifts and a collaborative spirit would find a congregation ready to explore and grow.

The minister, supported by members, leads regular worship services in local aged care facilities.

Five small groups meet during the week for Bible study, discussion, and fellowship, led by lay members. Seasonal studies during Lent are facilitated by the Minister.

The congregation is generous in its support of wider church and community causes, including the Christmas Bowl, Frontier Services, Operation Christmas Child, Uniting, Kids Hope, and Rural Australians for Refugees. Social and invitational events—such as Trivia Night, Pancake Day, Harmony Singers concerts, Shearwater Sunday, and the UCA birthday celebration—are valued opportunities for connection with the wider community.

Pastoral Care: While the majority of the local congregation is aged over 60, there is a strong culture of congregationally provided pastoral care for one another, though the oversight and momentum for such care relies at least in part on the presence and energies of the Minister in Placement.

In this shared ministry, each congregation member is connected with an Elder or Pastoral Carer, and the Pastoral Carers Team meets three times a year. A prayer network, including all Pastoral Carers, supports members and the wider community through regular prayer by email.

Leadership: Leadership is well-established and collegial. A Worship Committee meets three times a year to plan regular services and special events. The Church Council comprises ten Elders alongside the Minister, with members sharing responsibility for various areas of church life and reporting on a rotating basis.

Communication and Facilities: St John's communicates through a clear and well-established mix of channels: a website, Facebook page, weekly emailed news sheet (including rosters and birthdays), and a regular publication, The Rock, distributed to both local and Shearwater members.

The church facilities are well-equipped and flexible, featuring air conditioning, audio-visual technology, art display space, adaptable seating, and full disability access.

In Summary

We believe that St John's is a congregation ready to welcome a minister who enjoys pastoral presence, collaborative leadership, and creative worship, stimulated by the challenge of finding and releasing a new generation of leaders and volunteers as together we serve our ministry within the community of faith and our mission to those beyond.

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

Increase in the number of members, particularly the newly retired and younger age groups.

Identifying and developing potential leaders as part of a transition to a renewed leadership team.

Development of additional missional activities (eg: use of "Our Shed" as a gathering place - for hospitality, music, art, extension of community meal, craft.)

B3 Does this placement relate to more than one congregation?

Yes No

If so, provide details on page 9.

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

There is very little ethnic diversity.

B5 What languages are spoken in the life of your:

Congregation, by		Community, by	
Individuals	English / Dutch	Individuals	English, Italian, Greek, Punjabi, Spanish
Groups	English	Groups	

B6 What languages are spoken by the congregation in worship?

English

B7 Describe any involvement your congregation has in covenanting with first nations people.

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

None



C Mission

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

Community meal. Our community meal is held on a Monday night and regularly feeds up to 80 meals. Most people are served in the hall but some collect a take away meal at the door. The meal has attracted a good number of volunteers from the community to support the church members in cooking, serving and cleaning up.

Kids Hope. The Kids Hope organisation is a mentoring program and our church supports the Newhaven Primary school, currently with 5 mentors, but with scope to expand.

Winter Shelter. The Bass Coast winter shelter commenced this year under the coordination of a committee of the interchurch council. The aim was to providing 5 nights shelter divided between the Anglican church and St Johns. There were permit issues and building requirements to be met before it could commence. St Johns was able to satisfy requirements and commenced the program. It is a program sponsored by the Inter-church Council on the island. The committee intend to expand the program next winter. St Johns aims to continue this program at our church.

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

Develop an expression of worship, (complementing existing services and aligned with the common St John's ethos) designed for a younger generation

Implement practices that identify potential, attract and equip leaders for that expression of worship

Increase the Kids Hope involvement

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

Some increase with new members moving to the area who are under retirement age. With new members an increased use of musical instruments and solo singing in worship. Some community connections and congregational involvement has diminished due to the Minister not living in the community


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

Realistically we expect to lose some key people with many who are no longer able to contribute to the life of the congregation as people age, but there is hope for congregation growth of newly retired people and younger families. We anticipate further development of the "Our Shed" activities and consolidation of other missional activities.,

D The Community

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

Phillip Island is a beautiful island located in southern Victoria about 130 kilometres from Melbourne at the entrance to Westernport Bay and accessed by bridge from the fishing village of San Remo on the mainland. The island measures 26km by 9km and covers an area of 1000 hectares with 100 kilometres of coastline, including Churchill Island, adjacent to Phillip Island. A considerable area of Phillip Island is set apart as a Nature Park (including both land and ocean areas), with large sections zoned for rural and agricultural use.



The coastal villages of Cowes, Ventnor, Rhyll, Newhaven and San Remo are popular tourist destinations characterised by large numbers of holiday and second homes, and some holiday apartments.

Recent years has seen an increasing number of permanent residents, particularly those recently retired, some of whom are moving into their former holiday or second home while others are being attracted to the number of more specialised lifestyle developments on the island.

POPULATION approximately 14,660 (2025) but swells significantly (almost 4-fold) during holiday periods, as a tourist destination it attracts an estimated 3.5 million visitors each year. As in many parts of regional Australia, Phillip Island loses young adults to Melbourne and other large cities for further education and employment opportunities.

Age ranges with the largest percentages are children and people in their 60's. The resident population is not ethnically diverse, and many are on low incomes or pensions. 500 people identify their religion as Uniting Church. see also attached Social profile data.

D2 What makes this an enjoyable place to live?

Beautiful surroundings, friendly local community, community involvement, good State and private schools, interesting attractions and events, good aged care facilities, interesting visitors, developing facilities (new day hospital, new library, museum and cultural centre).

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

Wealth gap between some retirees and young families and pensioners. Above-average low-socio-economic group in local state schools, homelessness, lack of transport, lack of low-cost housing. Large numbers of workers employed in hospitality often working on weekends. Concern about overdevelopment and loss of natural surroundings, concern about pollution in the bay and effects of climate change on the foreshore. Parking and accessibility to shops is an issue during holiday times.

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

While almost 50% of the local community is under 50 years, only 7% is in that age bracket in the congregation. The community has 20% over 70 years and the congregation has 66%. Both the community and the congregation have little ethnic diversity and few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The community has even numbers of male and female people, while the congregation has 62% female.

D5 What community facilities are present in the local area?

An emergency medical hub operates 24 hours per day and a new day hospital is due for completion this year with a public dental clinic.. An ambulance service operates on Phillip Island. A recently-refurbished public hospital is situated in Wonthaggi. There are three aged care facilities.

There are 4 government primary schools, a junior secondary government college and a private primary/secondary school in the Phillip Island/San Remo area.

A new community cultural centre includes a library, museum, cinema/theatre, art gallery and meeting rooms. There is a Community Centre (P.I.C.A.L.) located next to St John's Uniting Church in Cowes which provides opportunities for short -term training and interest groups. The centre also accommodates a Centrelink office, and the PICAL Pantry (food service for those in need.)



Local service clubs include Lions, Rotary, World Vison, Red Cross, Vinnies, RAR, , Men’s Shed, Bushbank etc. A number of art and craft groups exist along with an Arts Society, Dramatic Society, Historical society, Probus groups and a Garden club. There are many sporting groups, a golf club, a bowling green, and a ten-pin bowling facility.

Transport to and from the island is primarily by road, with a daily passenger ferry service from Stony Point. Public transport is limited to 8 return trips daily on the V-line bus to/from Melbourne and there is a frequent bus service from Cowes to Wonthaggi. Bus transport on the island is available for school travellers and a taxi service operates from Cowes. A number of bicycle tracks have been constructed, linking various areas on the island.