



PRESBYTERY MINISTRY PROFILE

1. The role of Presbytery

The function of Presbyteries is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except for those agencies which are directly responsible to the Synod or Assembly. It will in particular exercise oversight over congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another's faith and bear one another's burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Jesus Christ. It will promote those wider aspects of the work of the Church committed to it by the Synod or the Assembly.¹

All of these functions are dependent upon the key factor of Presbyteries having relational oversight² for those congregations within its bounds. This is not oversight as exercising power or control but a relational way of being where the gathered members of the Uniting Church are cared for and working together to fulfil their call to discipleship in Jesus Christ.

1.1. The functions of the Presbytery

We are first and foremost called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. We gather together as the body of Christ and join in his life and mission. The Uniting Church, according to the Basis of Union, has structured herself through a series of inter-related councils to meet this end.

The core responsibilities of presbyteries are laid out in the Constitution and Regulation 3.1.3, and fall into three key areas: Pastoral, Mission/Education and Administration.

When Presbyteries are functioning well, the life of the whole church is enhanced:

- Congregations are supported and their life enriched;
- Congregations are helped in identifying and building their missional and ecumenical possibilities;
- Links between congregations, schools and agencies and the wider church are forged and strengthened;
- People in ministry roles (lay and ordained) are encouraged, equipped and supported;
- Educational possibilities for congregations and those in ministry are facilitated;
- Relationships are developed with cross-cultural ministries;
- The relationship with Congress is strengthened (where applicable); and
- Communication with the various parts of the Synod is clear, building up strong relationships between all councils of the Church.

1.2. Presbytery–Synod Relationships

The Presbytery does not exist in isolation, but in relationship with the Synod and other Presbyteries. In 2016 the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania adopted a set of core relational expectations which set out the basis for the Synod and Presbyteries to work together to build capacity for being the church at mission in contextual ways, ensuring the strategic use of property for missional purposes, and establishing a coordinated relationship between the Synod's leadership and presbyteries' leadership, with a spirit of mutuality and mutual accountability.³

These expectations were further detailed by the Synod in 2017 when it requested Presbyteries to engage collaboratively and in a coordinated manner with the Synod to

¹ Paragraph 15, The Basis of Union (1992 edition)

² Relational Oversight is the focused care that a council or person has for another that involves ensuring they keep the faith of the church, are given support and encouragement for ministry and are held accountable for faith and action.

³ Synod Resolution 16.6.20F.

enable Presbyteries to function in ways that are “lighter and simpler”, and so be free to give priority to the Presbyteries’ vital task of oversight involving pastoral-missional leadership.⁴

To ensure that these expectations are embodied in the ministry team models adopted by Presbyteries, the Synod further resolved to request each Presbytery and the Equipping Leadership for Mission unit to enter into a process of conversation and discernment as part of the implementation process to develop a ministry team model appropriate for its life and for effective resourcing for enabling mission.⁵

2. Description of the geographic and demographic area of the Presbytery

The Presbytery's boundaries stretch from Lorne in the south-west to Queenscliff in the south-east and include all the Bellarine Peninsula and Geelong. The western edge of the Presbytery includes Bacchus Marsh and Sunbury.

In the north, the Presbytery includes Macedon Ranges, and then on the eastern boundary it includes Wallan, Craigieburn, to Coburg, Brunswick, Northcote, Darebin and Croxton. All of Melbourne's western and north western suburbs are within the Presbytery's boundaries.

This presbytery has an extensive varied demography, from high density inner city living, to the medium density living in the Northern suburbs, to low density housing of the rural country side from the Surf Coast and surrounding area across to the Macedon Ranges. It has pockets of low socio-economic living as well as established neighbourhoods of great wealth, and a large variety of retail businesses and light industrial areas.

We have over 70 congregations many of which are intercultural communities, some large, some small. We also have a number of agencies and schools in our bounds. We are very diverse: large and small, city and country, single and intercultural, traditional and experimental.

Narana Aboriginal Cultural Centre located in Grovedale is a division of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress that is the Aboriginal arm of the Uniting Church in Australia. Narana is an organisation which provides an educational and tourism- focused destination committed to providing a welcome into today's Indigenous culture. Narana emphasis is on building healthy relationships and developing a shared understanding, and the Presbytery is committed to developing partnerships.

3. Description of the Uniting Church within the Presbytery of Port Phillip West

The Presbytery of Port Phillip West is a region of great diversity. It includes older and well-established areas and others which are brand new and developing. Congregations are also very diverse:

- ethnically;
- in size;
- in expressions of worship;
- theologically; and
- in resources.

There are congregations which are growing in size while some are declining, and others are looking at new ways of “being church”. There are several ‘gathered congregations’ – congregations in which members come from a wide range of places to worship together.

Intercultural congregations and faith communities include communities whose backgrounds include Vietnamese, Sudanese, Filipino, Samoan and Tongan members as well as individuals from other ethnic groups. There are also some specific ministries with families and children in both new and established housing areas, ministries with faith communities, ministry amongst people with disabilities and mental health needs. There is also a significant chaplaincy ministry within aged care and community service institutions, universities, hospitals, prisons and schools These ministries are both spiritual and practical in nature.

⁴ Synod Resolution 17.4.9A(a).

⁵ Synod Resolution 17.6.11.1(d).

The Presbytery carries responsibility for a great deal of property which raises issues of missional strategy and maintenance. The Presbytery is asset rich and has carefully developed a strong investment portfolio. However, future development is predicated on investment growth.

The Presbytery Office is located at 235 Derrimut Road, Hoppers Crossing, and provides office and meeting room accommodation, as well as ample car parking. It is located in the Hoppers Crossing Uniting Church complex and is within walking distance of Werribee Plaza. Presbytery Ministers share a pleasant office, with space available for private meetings and conversations.

4. Our Mission Strategy

The Vision of the Presbyteries Regenerating the Church - 2021 Strategy speaks about participating in and witnessing to the wonder of God's mission. Joining in with God's mission, centred in Christ and empowered by the Spirit, is our call as a Presbytery. This mission is wondrous. It is beautiful and amazing, awe inspiring and ineffable; it is life giving and liberating. It is also the mission of the Crucified God. God who is present in pain and suffering; God beside the marginalised and broken; God with the rejected and oppressed; God who heals the fragile creation.

The church is called to participate in and witness to this mission; to be mission shaped. To be mission shaped means two primary things. First, for the total life of a community to be an instrument through which 'Christ bears witness to himself' in the power of the Spirit. One of the ways that the Basis of Union describes the witness of the church is as follows:

'The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself.'⁶

The Spirit of Christ makes possible the witness of any community of Christ and enables us to participate in and witness to the mission of God. Every aspect of our life is an opportunity to bear witness to the Gospel as we find our identity in Christ by following his mission into the world. This includes the way we gather as communities, our treatment of each other, our use of property, our ecumenical engagement and our love and service in the world. The church may be fragile 'clay jars', but we have an irresistible and beautiful treasure that shapes our life, and that our total life witnesses to (2 Corinthians 4: 7).

Participating in and witnessing to God's mission is transformational; as we encounter God's grace, forgiveness, liberation, love, justice and reconciliation. As a Pilgrim people, we invite others to journey alongside us in participating in and witnessing to the new humanity and new creation that God has inaugurated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The calling of the church is to witness to Christ through the shape of our life as followers of Jesus Christ in the life of the Spirit.

Second, to be 'mission shaped' means that participating in and witnessing to God's mission in Christ through the Spirit is essential to the life of communities of Christ. Mission is not an optional extra to being the church. It is essential to being the church. Our call is not simply to do 'things better' or to do 'new things', but to allow the Spirit of Christ to regenerate and reshape our life as we join in with God's mission.⁷

A full copy of "Regenerating the Church 2021 Presbytery Strategy" can be viewed on our website <http://www.regeneratingthechurch.org.au/>.

5. Presbytery organisation and structure

The Presbytery of Port Phillip West has been structured in a way that provides leadership through elected office-bearers (Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer), Presbytery Minister placements, and a number of committees and working groups that involve both lay and ordained members of the Presbytery.

The formation of the Presbytery of Port Phillip West brought a variety of models of working together – from more formal networks, to committed partnerships of congregations, agencies and ministers, to collegial networks on a more informal basis. Over the past decade the Presbytery has

⁶ Paragraph 3, The Basis of Union (1992 edition)

⁷ Regenerating the Church 2021 Strategy

continued to take the best features of all of these models, and to develop new ways of meeting and working together to achieve the missional and organisational goals of the Presbytery. In addition to its Standing Committee, the primary committees of the Presbytery include Pastoral Relations (PRC), Administration, Property and Finance (APF), Ministry Formation (MFC) and Mission, Strategy and Education (MSE).

5.1. Presbytery Minister placements

According to the regulations, there are a number of tasks which need to be undertaken in order for Presbyteries to fulfil their role. For the Presbyteries to fulfil their roles, they need to be well resourced. In 2017 the Synod resolved that funding will be provided for two positions; and Presbyteries were encouraged to develop sources of income beyond that provided from the Synod budget, through the appropriate stewardship of property that does not deprive the wider church of just and appropriate sharing.⁸

An evolving staffing model within the Synod Equipping Leadership for Ministry unit will also ensure that there is a close working relationship between unit staff and each Presbytery, with the possibility of some staff resources (initially estimated at approximately 0.5 FTE) being appointed to a position designated as “adjunct staff” of the unit and engaging in its activities and resourcing.

Key roles of Presbytery staff include:

- Exercising pastoral and missional oversight of those providing ministry undertaken in the congregations, agencies and schools in the Presbytery;
- Supporting congregations in their worship and missional life and witness;
- Ensuring the shared flow of resourcing (missional, financial, education and practical) for equipping leadership for mission within the presbytery;
- Upholding the ethos of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
- Providing pastoral and liturgical expression of the ministry where appropriate;
- Working effectively in a team context with other Presbytery staff and with Presbytery office bearers (Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer).

In order to fulfil its mission, the Presbytery of Port Phillip West has given approval in principle for a presbytery staffing model based on an Elected Chairperson (0.5 role) at least two full-time (or equivalent) Presbytery Minister positions as a basis for future planning and one full-time Presbytery Secretary/Administrator, in addition to the assistance provided through volunteer activity in areas such as Committee Chairpersons and members. The two positions funded by the Synod are seen as Placements because of the need to ensure that the primary focus of the team is the mission of God with the Church.

The Presbytery recognizes the particular needs of the congregations within its bounds for intercultural and missional support. Presbytery Ministers will relate with congregations and others through a variety of face-to-face encounters in local settings as well as through a variety of communication technologies.

There are significant benefits for both the Presbytery and the staff in ensuring that all staff are to some degree capable of performing multiple roles. In order to provide the maximum flexibility, and to allow for evolving and changing work patterns, a common position description has been established for all positions. Nevertheless, it is recognized that people bring individual gifts, graces and skills, and so the team will be selected to ensure that there are team members capable of:

- Working with congregations, agencies and institutions;
- Working with ministry agents;
- Working with administration, finance and property to support both congregations and ministers; and
- Working with UAICC in exploration mission possibilities

These ministries:

- are open to both lay and ordained people;

⁸ Synod Resolution 17.6.11.1(f).

- may consist of two full-time positions or of combinations of full-and part-time ministries; will be linked to the committee structure and networks within the Presbytery;
- will relate with congregations and others through a variety of face-to-face encounters in local settings as well as through electronic communication; and
- will liaise with the Synod Equipping Leadership for Mission unit and other services offered by the Synod to ensure that training and equipping for these ministries is made available.

6. Team Ministry

In walking the way of Jesus, it is expected that the ministry team will reflect a healthy model of shared servant ministry, and:

- provide a leadership role together with the Presbytery leadership team;
- meet and pray weekly and work as a team;
- support each other and respect each other's role and expertise;
- accept a discipline of openness to accountability;
- engage in individual and team supervision;
- ensure there is a designated Presbytery Centre (primary office space); and
- model team ministry within the Presbytery, in relationships with Synod staff and the other Presbyteries;

6.1. Placements

The two Synod-funded placements for these ministries will be approved through the normal placements process. There will also be opportunity to formally advertise the placements. They will be placements of the Presbytery.

A lay person appointed as a Presbytery Minister will be classified as a Pastor (Regulation 2.2.2).

6.2. Accountability

The two Presbytery Ministers will be part of and accountable to the whole Presbytery through the Standing Committee. A leadership team including the Presbytery Chairperson and the chairs of the four Presbytery Committees (PRC, APF, MFC & MSE) will be responsible to the standing committee for the exercise of this accountability for the team and the individual members of the team. This leadership team would have responsibility for oversight of the staff positions.

The Presbytery will designate the chairperson who has responsibility for convening meetings and coordinating ministry functions (Regulation 2:11.3(b)).

The Presbytery Standing Committee will require the leadership team to exercise both pastoral care and oversight of the Presbytery Ministry team. This will include revision of tasks where necessary and through negotiation.

The leadership team will agree on the allocation of tasks among Presbytery Ministers and will maintain a management document (see Appendix C) which sets out the particular and agreed responsibilities of each person.

The two (or more) Presbytery Ministers will be members of the Presbytery Standing Committee, and each will be expected to relate to one or more committees and other groups within the Presbytery, providing leadership and liaison with the Standing Committee and other groups as required.

The Presbytery Standing Committee will ensure that the leadership team initiates an annual appraisal of the ministry of each Presbytery Minister.

6.3. Shared Responsibilities

The Presbytery Ministers will work together in the following areas, taking both group and individual responsibility for:

- Relational oversight of the those providing ministry undertaken in the congregations in the Presbytery;
- Upholding the ethos of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
- Attending regular Presbytery Minister team meetings;
- Assisting and encouraging the development of Presbytery leaders for their ministries;
- Taking initiatives to fulfil key priorities and policies as determined from time to time by the Presbytery;
- Working with and supporting Presbytery committees in ways which ensures efficient use of time and skills;
- Facilitating relationships between those in various ministries of the UCA;
- Helping to equip and enrich all congregations and agencies to engage in mission beyond the bounds of the church;
- Engaging in regional planning for the life and work of the Uniting Church in the area through congregations, faith communities, Uniting Care and Aged Care agencies, chaplaincies and UCA schools;
- Fostering local and regional ecumenism;
- Participating in worship in the Presbytery and in its congregations; and
- Advocating throughout the Presbytery for the work of the Uniting Church in Synod and Assembly.

7. Ministry gifts and skills required in team ministry within a Presbytery context

The Presbytery Ministers work together as a team. While each Minister will have the freedom to work and operate independently, it is expected that there will be an understanding of the way the roles complement each other and those of the elected leaders, and a willingness to work together to ensure both continuity and seamlessness in the support of the Presbytery. The following are seen as characteristics which will be shared by the team.

7.1. Personal Qualities and Experience

Each member of the team will have:

- A sound knowledge of the structure of the UCA, and prior involvement in a range of UCA Councils, including an understanding of, and commitment to the ethos of the UCA and the Presbytery model adopted by the Synod in 2017;
- Familiarity with the UCA Basis of Union, Constitution, Regulations and Manual for Meetings;
- An understanding of ministry and mission in the UCA, with developed theological insight and reflective skills;
- An understanding of and commitment to the intercultural nature of the UCA, UAICC and its commitment to working with both First and Second Peoples.

Each member of the team will:

- Understand that re-definition and role adjustment may take place as the Presbytery discerns its way forward;
- Have competency as a leader, and be able to inspire others;
- Be able to articulate the importance of a Call to the Ministry of Presbytery Minister for the life of the Church and for him or herself;
- Have a realistic sense of her or his own identity and an awareness of strengths and weaknesses;
- Have the flexibility to work with people in a variety of contexts;
- A commitment to Team Ministry and regular team meetings, while able to work independently and co-ordinate activity within a team environment;
- Be motivated with energy and enthusiasm.

7.2. Skills and Abilities

Each member of the team will have:

- Demonstrated capacity to think strategically and to facilitate strategic planning;

- An ability to reflect on issues theologically within the broad theological framework of the Basis of Union of the UCA;
- Demonstrated ability to recognise and take advantage of new mission opportunities (internal and external) in line with the Presbytery Mission Strategy
- Demonstrated capacity to act as change agent, comfortable with change and able to manage change while energising and resourcing complex organisations;
- Demonstrated capacity to lead and work with people, councils and agencies within the UCA in an encouraging and constructive manner;
- Demonstrated effective interpersonal communication skills, particularly in the areas of liaison, negotiation, mediation, decision making and problem solving;
- Demonstrated capacity to implement policy decisions, coupled with compassion.

7.3. Desirable skills and qualities:

Each member of the team will be able to demonstrate:

- A pro-active approach that listens and responds to people;
- Creativity; and an ability to deal with ongoing role adjustment;
- Clarity on responsibilities and boundaries;
- Willingness to break new ground without losing focus on ‘business as usual’;
- Accountability – in the role and with others;
- A well-organised approach, with good time management and relevant IT skills;
- Good pastoral and administrative skills.
- Participate and engage in Professional Development

8. The Presbytery Minister Roles

Particular tasks must be undertaken, and particular responsibilities exercised in each of the three key areas referred to above. These tasks will be undertaken by the team as a whole, and are not linked one-to-one with any given position or appointment.

The primary tasks which must be undertaken by the team are listed in the following sections.

It is recognised, however, that no individual will be expected to work across, or be expert in all these areas. The profile anticipates that associated with each position will be a management document (see Appendix C) which will set out particular tasks and expectations for the person appointed to the position. This will be a “living” document that will need to be updated and adjusted following any appointment as the skills and gifts of the appointee are developed. It may also be necessary to make appropriate fine-tuning adjustments following, for example, annual reviews or if there are changes in other placements in the Presbytery.

8.1. Working with congregations, agencies and institutions

- Helping to equip and enrich all congregations and agencies to engage in mission beyond the bounds of the church;
- Helping congregations and ministry workers to develop, implement and evaluate their local and regional mission plans;
- Engaging in regional planning for the life and work of the Uniting Church in the area through congregations, faith communities, Uniting Care agencies, chaplaincies and UCA schools
- Developing expertise in mission and theological discernment in congregations, faith communities and agencies
- Helping Presbytery establish and strengthen links with its schools and agencies;
- Facilitating mission studies and reviews of future ministry requirements prior to profile writing;
- Helping congregations and agencies identify and develop suitable placements for both specified ministries and pastor;

8.2. Working with Ministry Agents

- Facilitating relationships between those in various ministries of the UCA;
- Coordinating the work of pastoral care of ministry agents and their families across the Presbytery;
- Resourcing the Ministry Formation Committee with respect to:
 - Work with people in a period of discernment
 - The process of application for candidature for a specified ministry

- Pastoral Care of Candidates
- Helping with the preparation for readiness for the ordination the ordination itself.
- Resourcing the Pastoral Relations Committee with respect to:
 - Encouraging ministry agents in regard to continuing education, annual ministry conferences, supervision, peer support groups, taking leave entitlements, updating profiles, conducting reviews of ministry, mentoring and compliance with the Code of Ethics;
 - Working with the PRC to manage the appointment, training and support of Joint Nominating Committees;
- Resourcing the Mission Strategy and Education Committee with respect to:
 - Work to collaborate with Mission Strategy & Education to develop education opportunities across the Presbytery;
 - Encourage Congregations to understand and participate in the Regenerating the Church 2021 strategy;
 - Work with Mission Strategy & Education to undertake Mission, Visioning and Planning;
 - To undertake Mission Studies throughout the Presbytery;
 - Collaborate with MSE on the support and review of Presbytery Mission Placements and Regeneration Ministries.
- Conducting or participating in debriefing at the end of placements;
- Engaging in crisis work with ministers and congregations, conflict resolution and support in times of loss and grief;
- Supporting the chairperson of the Presbytery in matters of discipline.

8.3. Working with Administration, Property and Finance Committee to support both congregations and ministers

- Facilitating of communication and relationships within the Presbytery, Synod congregations, agencies and schools;
- Ensuring that the practical work of being a structured organization, responsible for the resources it has under its stewardship, is done faithfully and carefully;
- Being the face of the Presbytery for finance, property and strategy issues;
- Working with the Synod HR Department to ensure oversight of human resources practice in congregations;
- Assisting congregations to fulfil the UCA Regulations, especially those referring to property, investments, banking and auditing;
- Coordinating and physical maintenance of the office of the Presbytery Centre.

9. Presbytery Roles

The Presbytery has established role descriptions for the positions of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. These are included as Appendix A to this document to provide clarity and to indicate areas of both overlap and difference between these roles and those of the Presbytery Ministers.

10. Position Requirements

The position of Presbytery Minister within the Presbytery of Port Phillip West is a placement within the Uniting Church in Australia and is open to ordained and lay members of the Church. The person appointed to the position will require:

- Flexibility in work practice, including availability for scheduled after-hours and occasional weekend work;
- Occasional intra- and interstate travel may be required;
- A current Working with Children Check as a mandatory requirement;
- A valid driver's licence; and
- Accreditation (or a willingness to seek accreditation) as a community chaplain with VCC Emergency Services.