

## Model Memorandum of Understanding

between N congregation of the Anglican Church  
and N congregation of the Uniting Church  
for the formation of the joint congregation known as  
N

*Note: the suggested wordings here should be adapted as appropriate  
and necessary for the local situation.*

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country

### 2. Thanksgiving

The N Anglican Church and the N Uniting Church give thanks to God for

- a. The faithful life and witness of congregations N and N, their mission and service in the town/region of [Name] since [Year]
- b. Their ongoing life and witness to the gospel, now reaching this new form

### 3. Background for agreement

- a. History of local cooperation
  - i. Outline steps on the way to forming cooperating congregation, perhaps including:
    1. Joint mission/outreach projects
    2. Current/developing practice of shared ministry and worship
    3. Current/developing practice of shared property usage
  - ii. Other involvement in local ecumenism
- b. Acknowledgement of agreements between the Anglican Church in Australia and the Anglican Church of Australia, including
  - i. The Trinity Declaration (from 1980's last updated 1999)
  - ii. Weaving a New Cloth (received 2014 (A) and 2015(UCA))
  - iii. Other regional cooperations – mentioning cooperating congregations in the Presbytery / Diocese that have inspired this cooperation

### 4. Vision

The local vision for the cooperating congregation.

This could include or modify biblical vision of Christian unity and theological affirmations in Weaving a New Cloth, possibly as follows:

#### A Biblical Vision of Christian Unity

The unity of Christians is a gift from God before it is a task for the church. Our unity is in Christ. He is our peace, creating in himself one new humanity across humankind's divisions, reconciling Jew and Gentile to God in one body through the cross (Ephesians 2:14-16). In Christ we are built together spiritually, across our differences, into a dwelling place for God

(Ephesians 2:22). This is a *spiritual* unity, grounded in the unity and mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son and in the unity of believers with the Son and the Father (John 17:20-21).

However, the unity of believers with each other, for which Jesus prays, a unity in diversity, is also a *visible* unity. Moreover, not an end in itself, it is a *missional* unity. The unity of Christians serves the mission of the triune God: that the world may believe that the Father has sent the Son (John 17:21) and the Spirit (John 14:26). To make this unity visible and concrete is to honour the gift of God in Christ.

#### Together as a cooperating congregation we affirm that

1. We stand in the continuity of the apostolic faith, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.
2. We seek to witness faithfully to the gospel and seek to be more fully engaged in God's mission in the world.
3. We believe that the Holy Spirit gives to the whole people of God gifts for the upbuilding of the church and for its continuation in the mission of Jesus Christ.
4. We believe that the ordained ministry in both the UCA and the ACA is given by God as an instrument of grace, notwithstanding our different understandings of it. We believe that by this ministry, the people of God are called to faith, strengthened to witness to the gospel and empowered to serve in hope and love.
5. We commit together to the faithful preaching of the word of God, and to the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion in accordance with each Church's tradition and teaching.
6. We acknowledge the personal, communal and collegial oversight of both the ACA and the UCA, exercised in its different forms.

## 5. Provision of Ministry

This could be organized as a team ministry of ministers from both traditions, an alternating model of ministry provision, or an understanding that ministry provision in the cooperating congregation will continue to be supplied from one of the two denominations. In all models the ministers committing to the cooperating congregation should commit to the cooperation, and commit themselves, as far as possible, to work within the ethos of both denominations (including codes of ethics and ministry practice, knowledge and understanding of church structures, discipline structures). One of the following may be a starting place for describing your situation.

### a. Team Ministry

- i. Ministers from each denomination (part or full time, time expectations and other responsibilities should be specified)
- ii. Commitment to working in team
- iii. Understanding of cooperation and team structure (UCA ministry teams are generally non-hierarchical, so any different structure would need to be well considered)
- iv. Establishing a team leader and responsibilities
- v. Accountabilities – each minister to their own denomination
- vi. Understandings about roles and expertise (presiding at worship etc)
- vii. Team understanding about members preserving links to their denomination (e.g. baptisms and confirmations etc)

## b. Alternating Ministry

- i. Denominations commit to provision of ministry in an alternating fashion
- ii. Each call process will proceed under structures of the responsible church
- iii. Stipend / remuneration as specified by relevant denomination
- iv. Relevant denomination responsible for Induction, with invitations to go to representatives of the other denomination (Diocese or Presbytery) as appropriate

## c. Entrusted Ministry (ongoing supply of ministry from one denomination)

**Note:** Ministry Agents will be respectful of the importance of all members of each denomination maintaining their denominational relationships as appropriate.

## 6. The Sacraments

Any person being baptized will be included in the Baptismal rolls of either the Anglican or Uniting Church, and should use the appropriate rites of the denomination.

Ordained Anglican and Uniting Church Ministers are able to preside at Holy Communion in accordance with this agreement.

Particular arrangements for this Cooperating Congregation include... (Note: see comments in the document, "Guidelines for ACA UCA Cooperation in Congregational Activity")

## 7. Responsibilities of the Cooperating Congregation

These could include:

- i. Appointing members of a Joint Management Committee
- ii. Making arrangements for the call of a Minister
- iii. Support of a Minister
- iv. Maintaining relationships with Presbytery and Diocese

Reference could be made to UCA Regulation 3.1.1 (The purpose and responsibilities of a congregation) and The Parish Governance Act at Part 2 and Part 3 (the Anglican understanding of a parish) for the ACA.

## 8. Joint management committee

A cooperating congregation could proceed with a single "management committee" taking on roles of a Church Council / Vestry OR the congregation could maintain an ACA vestry, a UCA Church Council and a Joint Management Committee, each with specified roles.

### a. Membership of management committee

- v. Election following nominations by congregation (or other)
- vi. Size
- vii. Ensuring denominational representation

### b. Responsibilities

- i. Oversight of worship – in consultation with Vestry / Church Council as appropriate
- ii. Property management and maintenance

- iii. Accountabilities and reporting
- iv. Financial management

c. Accountabilities

- i. To both Vestry and Church Council (if applicable)
- ii. To Presbytery and Diocese

## 9. Rolls of congregational membership

- a. Separate rolls of membership to be maintained
- b. Rolls to be maintained by the Joint Management Committee OR by the ACA Vestry and UCA Church Council

## 10. Safe Church provisions and procedures

- a. Safe Church Training – agreement to follow the training requirements of ... denomination
- b. Safe Church Contact person to be appointed by (Joint Management Committee / each denomination)
- c. Record holding for WWCC records – is this to be with each denomination or with the Joint Management Committee. In the case of a negative notice, ensuring adequate pathways for action and reporting
- d. Reportable Conduct – report through both Safe Church structures, with collaboration as necessary for reporting to be clear
- e. Ministers remain accountable to their denomination for Safe Church matters and for professional standards (Code of Ethics / Supervision requirements etc.)

## 11. Property and Finance

- a. Funding of ministry - Shared equally or other model (to be specified). Note that funding model can have implications for ministry provision model selected as some funding sources may be limited in their application
- b. Bank accounts
- c. Shared property agreements
- d. A cooperating congregation could:
- e. Share one church property
- f. Shared usage of more than one property – possibly with different usage
- g. Note: These decisions do not rest with the cooperating congregation alone. It may be helpful to note in the MoU the different bodies who have a stake in the property decisions, and the necessary consultations / permissions required. For the UCA this is both the Presbytery and the Synod. Congregations do not own their own properties (which are held by the UCA Property Trust – Victoria) and there are limitations on the potential use of property sales proceeds.
- h. Noting of existing bequests / trusts / grants / project funding / denominational financial support, noting terms and conditions, limitations, duration
- i. Financial returns and reporting are required for both denominations.

## 12. Dispute resolution

Disputes which involve the Joint Management Committee are to be referred to a meeting of the Bishop (or nominee) and an appropriate officer of the Presbytery.

Complaints about an Anglican member(s) or ministry agent(s) should be made through Anglican complaints processes. Complaints about a Uniting Church member(s) or ministry agent(s) should be made through Uniting Church processes. In the event that there are difficulties in accessing these processes related to denominational membership, the Bishop and an appropriate officer of the Presbytery may be consulted.

## 13. Dissolution

Dissolution of the cooperating congregation can come about:

- a. by the decision of the congregation at a congregational meeting, following consultation with the Presbytery and Bishop; or
- b. by the decision of either the Diocese or the Presbytery, in accordance with relevant processes.

In the event of the dissolution of the cooperating congregation, the Diocese and Presbytery shall ensure appropriate pastoral care for Anglican and Uniting Church members respectively.

In consultation about potential dissolution of the congregation, property and finance questions will need to be resolved, e.g.:

- i. Denominationally owned property will remain with that denomination;
- ii. Joint accounts will be resolved in consultations;
- iii. Any property sales proceeds remain with original owning denomination.

## 14. Schedule for review

This Memorandum of Understanding, and the operation of the congregation, is to be initially reviewed by the Bishop and the Presbytery Standing Committee (or their appointees) between 12 and 18 months after the date of signing, and then not less than at least every 5 years after the initial review. The Bishop and the Presbytery Standing Committee are to confirm the process for each review.

## 15. Date on which this agreement commences: . . .

## 16. Signatories

Incumbent (Anglican), Minister in placement (UCA)  
Chairpersons of Congregations/Church Council/Vestry  
Diocese Signatures  
Presbytery Signatures

The Trinity Declaration provides sample sign-off statements, which could be adapted. See suggestions in Appendix A below.

## Appendix A

### Agreement form (modify as necessary)

#### 1a. Vicar's approval (Anglican Church)

Diocese \_\_\_\_\_  
Vicar \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish \_\_\_\_\_  
Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I signify support for this congregation to participate in a joint congregation of Anglican and Uniting Church members in accordance with the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2a. Parish Council/Vestry approval

Diocese \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish Council / Vestry \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting date \_\_\_\_\_

It was resolved that this congregation should form a joint congregation of Anglican and Uniting Church members at [Location] in accordance with denominational governance  
This approval was passed by [number of positive votes] to [number of negative votes] votes, being a majority of three-quarters or more of the [number] members of the council present and voting.

Signed (Council Secretary) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1b. Minister's approval (Uniting Church)

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_  
Minister \_\_\_\_\_  
Congregation \_\_\_\_\_

I express support for this congregation to participate in a joint congregation of Anglican and Uniting Church members in accordance with the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2b. Church Council approval

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_  
Church Council \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting date \_\_\_\_\_

It was resolved that this congregation should form a joint congregation of Anglican and Uniting Church members at [Location] in accordance with denominational governance

This approval was passed by consensus/agreement.

Signed (Council Secretary) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 3a. Congregation/parish meeting approval

Diocese \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish/Congregation \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting date \_\_\_\_\_

It was resolved that this congregation should form a joint congregation of Anglican and Uniting Church members at [Location] in accordance with denominational governance.

Signed (Chairperson) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Bishop's approval

Diocese \_\_\_\_\_  
Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm the approval of the diocese for the parish of [Parish] to participate in the forming of the joint congregation at [Location]. Approval for this project is given for a period of [number] years from [date] to [date] subject to a proper evaluation and report after [date]. The project may be extended upon application when the date of its expiry has been reached.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 3b. Congregation meeting approval

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_  
Congregation \_\_\_\_\_  
Meeting date \_\_\_\_\_

It was resolved that this congregation should form a joint congregation of Anglican and Uniting Church members at [Location] in accordance with denominational governance.

Signed (Chairperson) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Presbytery approval

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm the approval of the presbytery for the congregation of [congregation] to participate in the forming of the joint congregation at [Location]. Approval for this project is given for a period of [number] years from [date] to [date] subject to a proper evaluation and report after [date]. The project may be extended upon application when the date of its expiry has been reached.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_