

The Fig Tree Project

PLACEMENT PROFILE Date: February 2023

SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 Placement name: Presbytery of Gippsland,
Lyrebird Ministry Team – vacancies **0.2, 0.25, 0.5 & 0.75 FTE**

1.2 The Lyrebird ministry team works within the following congregations:
(bold indicates current vacancies)

Mirboo North (0.2) Morwell (0.25) Traralgon, Glengarry, Rosedale (0.5)
Yarram, Devon North & Binginwarri (0.7)

Anglican/UCA Cooperating congregation at Churchill/Boolarra/Yinnar (0.75)
& ecumenical Federation University Chaplaincy (0.4)

1.3 Profile approved by the Presbytery of Gippsland (delegated to PRC) 08/02/23

1.4 The Primary purpose of placement:

To exercise ministry within the Lyrebird team:

- to know and to love congregations
- to participate with congregations in their worship, ministry and mission
- to share diverse gifts within the team
- to offer collegial support and cooperation within the team
- to encourage and empower entrepreneurial and innovative ministry together

1.5 Suitable for Minister of the Word / Deacon / Ordinand/ Pastor

1.6 The Lyrebird ministry team has capacity for approximately 2.8 FTE

The time fraction for each ministry placement is open to negotiation according to the ministry agents in the team.

1.7 Term: undefined up to 10 years (see Reg 2.7.3(a))

Ministry within the Lyrebird team will be open to the needs and capacities of the congregations. While the Terms of Placement are fixed, particular responsibilities will change in consultation and agreement with ministry agents, within the team and with the Presbytery.

The Fig Tree Project – Ministry Teams in Gippsland

Purpose of Ministry Teams

Through resourcing, support and leadership of the Presbytery, for ministry agents to:

- work cooperatively and share complimentary ministry, leadership & skills in Ministry Teams in the Presbytery of Gippsland;
- share mission and strategy within and beyond the gathered congregations;
- offer innovative and entrepreneurial ministry across the team
- be the primary pastoral minister for nominated congregations.

Vision and Mission priorities of Ministry Teams

- For each ministry agent to find collegial and Presbytery support within teams
- For ministry agents to embrace a 'common wealth' model of cooperative ministry.
- For mission and strategy to be an ongoing journey of conversation and discernment under the leadership of Resourcing Presbytery ministers.
- To share gifts, skills, and time based on needs and initiatives of ministry offered by the team.

Goals of Ministry Teams

- To love and to know congregations.
- To offer good leadership and support of ministers.
- To discern mission and strategic needs of ministry encompassed by the team
- To work creatively and cooperatively to meet ministry needs with available resources.
- To assist congregations in their mission and strategy.
- To encourage congregations to bless and support where possible emerging and innovative ministry beyond the gathered community.

Resourcing of Teams

- The Presbytery of Gippsland is committed to provide training in team and innovative leadership.

History of The Fig Tree Project and ministry in Gippsland

The Fig Tree Project was endorsed by the Presbytery of Gippsland in May 2019. It was born from the struggle of Mission Areas unable to meet ministry expectations and needs. At its simplest, the Fig Tree Project enables congregations to offer ministry in their own context without the need to combine with other congregations under complex structures. Ministry agents are called to the Presbytery into teams with pastoral responsibility for one or more congregations. The team model offers flexibility and a greater range of ministry gifts and skills.

Cooperating congregations of Churchill, Boolarra, Yinnar UCA & Anglican - Vacancy 0.75FTE

Boolarra: Tarwin St, Boolarra Churchill: Williams Ave, Churchill Yinnar (OpShop): Main St. Yinnar
Yinnar South: Middle Creek Rd, Yinnar South (Anglican)

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Vision - That the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be made known to all people through our community service, individual commitment and the life and worship of the Church.

Mission Statement - To know and praise God, serving Christ, the community and each other. Our Mission goals and strategic steps: evangelism and outreach, praise and worship, concern for our community, teaching and fellowship, organisational effectiveness, internal development and financial viability.

We are a caring, well-structured church family, that is seeking a shepherd leader to assist us to continue to be bridges into the community and explore new ways of being church. Our two distinct congregations meet across three worship places. We enjoy bible studies and teaching, want to be seen in the community, enhance and develop our youth & children's ministry and work ecumenically with Lumen Christ Catholic Church.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Located in the Latrobe Valley, Yinnar and Boolarra are small, rural community towns while Churchill is larger, with a campus of Federation University. The population changes seasonally with a high number Asian International Students. Long-term residents are connected with the power industry: there will be a deep social impact when it closes. Demographics in Churchill show we are older than the average population, with 32% classified as low-income, less culturally diverse, have the highest unemployment in the country, struggle with a lack of public transport, drug and alcohol issues, and have long waiting lists for substance abuse treatment and mental health services. Yinnar has largely younger families and Boolarra has an older, creative arts population. We are within 30 mins from the regional hospital, have GP services, state and private schools, emergency services, sporting facilities and many walking tracks. We connect with the community through meals at the Neighbourhood house, garage sales, community garden, the local newspaper printed from our premises, St Matt's Op Shop and the Men's Shed, Rotary and Lions clubs.

Our congregations are ageing and carry deep sadness after the resignation of the previous minister and the withdrawal of the Churches of Christ, Victoria, from our cooperative arrangement of more than 50 years. The Yinnar church is now an Op Shop raising well-needed ministry and mission funds. Boolarra congregation is declining, and we no longer have some of our key fellowship groups or people to fill monthly rosters.

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

This small, faithful, thoughtful and closeknit congregation seeks to find the balance between being and doing and to provide nurture for themselves, each other and the wider community with relatively minimal input from a ministry agent. They seek to gather in prayer and to build good pastoral relationships, particularly with their Child Care Centre and the Community Shed. They look for learning and being challenged in worship and studies, are deeply and variously engaged in the wider community, firmly embedded in the Uniting Church and seeking to be ecumenical. They are open to a variety of worship styles, and have online/Zoom capabilities. They are capable of pioneering and sometimes in danger of exhaustion.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Mirboo North is a small rural dormitory town feeding workforce to the Latrobe Valley and Leongatha. It is the local centre for dairy and potato farming and is on a tourist route. The population of Mirboo North is over 1600 in the town and 3000 in the district. The number of UCA people listed is 79, with 204 in the 3871 postcode. There is a Child Care Centre, kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and an Aged Care facility. There is a mix of retirees, families and tree-changers, most from an Anglo-European background. The annual Italian Festa draws thousands of people from across the state. There are over 70 community groups in the area. They are a stable congregation. The whole congregation makes up the church council. The congregation has a history of establishing new community ventures, such as the Community Shed and the Child Care Centre which is on site at the rear of the church building.

St Luke's, Morwell

Church, Op Shop & Men's Shed: 281 Princes Drive, Morwell. **Vacancy 0.25 FTE**

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Working in a strategic partnership with related community groups to develop our property into a vibrant hub with a spiritual basis, where people from disadvantaged sections of the community (with emphasis on mental or social issues) can feel welcome and valued. (*adopted by congregation March 17, 2019*). Broaden the scope of our Mental Health Week Arts Festival and hold it annually again and revitalise our worship experience. Enable the expansion of the Men's Shed and form stronger relationships. Continue our annual sunflower labyrinth in town.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Morwell's congregation is open, flexible and strong in community action theology. The 18 people range in age from 40-90's and have many different gifts and graces, appreciating a variety of worship styles. Most of us are ageing Anglo's and we are a warm and welcoming group. There are 10 confirmed members, 2 in association and 6 adherents. The Church Council is the whole of congregation and meets quarterly. In the last 2 years there has been two confirmations and one transfer out. We have a Lay Preacher, worship leaders, a social justice group, Ops Shop mission, Arts Festival Committee, the Message Board, a Facebook page and World Day of Prayer group. We no longer have any musicians and rely on more external help with gardening, cleaning and maintenance. Our Op Shop has a strong connection to the community with over 150 people coming through each week, and meets physical, social and spiritual needs. We have a tenancy arrangement with *Uniting* who use our site for counselling services and we are keen to develop ecumenical relationships.

Morwell is a rural industrial community in the centre of the Latrobe Valley. Severely impacted by the privatisation of the SEC in the '90's and the more recent closure of the Hazelwood Power Station and other large industries, the major employers in town are now health and social support, followed by retail, manufacturing, construction, hospitality and public administration. Stress points are poverty, unemployment and insufficient housing.

Traralgon District: Traralgon, Glengarry, Rosedale

Traralgon: 19-26 Park Lane, Traralgon Glengarry: Cairnbrook Rd, Glengarry

Rosedale: Queen St, Rosedale <http://traralgonuc.blogspot.com>

Vacancy : 0.5FTE (Note: Also seeking Community Engagement Officer 0.5)

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Our Mission: Sharing God's presence and reconciling love.

Our Vision: More wholehearted, more compassionate, more abundant life shared in our neighbourhoods.

Our Values: Inclusion, Justice, Prayer, Community, Growth.

Changes: The majority of the congregation are now in the over 80 age group, especially in the smaller worshipping centres. COVID-19 and the restrictions had significant impact and many members aged quickly over this time. Following the period of Intentional Interim Ministry, the congregation seeks to refocus on its mission and equip its members.

Our Goals:

- To shift from a 20th century institutional church to a 21st century missional orientation.
- To actively engage with our neighbourhoods through community connections, worship, and spiritual development and discipleship.
- To encourage and develop our individual and collective capacity for sustainability and resilience in the various aspects of our congregational life, to further enhance the renewal and fruitfulness of our mission and vision.

Strategic Steps:

Renewing, encouraging, and equipping leadership. Reorganisation of task groups into mission teams. Focus on achieving the vision through activities that have clearly defined, specific statements of purpose and defined measures of fruitfulness for activities, and through creativity and experimentation. Living within our financial means.

Delivery of the strategic priorities is facilitated and guided by a non-hierarchical ministry leadership team - operating accountably with members whose gifts and perspectives are different - to develop sustainable processes, and encourage, empower and equip those who really are on the front line. The ministry leadership team currently includes this Community Engagement Officer role (0.5 FTE, currently vacant), the mission-oriented minister/pastor (0.5 FTE, currently vacant), and lay members of the congregation in paid and/or volunteer roles of Mission Strategist, Pastoral Co-ordinator, and Worship Co-ordinator. The Community Engagement Officer has a particular focus on assisting the congregation in its vision for mission, including, but not limited to, supporting and equipping lay leadership and congregation members in building and sustaining community engagement, building networks with agencies and neighbouring groups, and developing expressions of Christian life within the community.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

Traralgon, a major regional centre within Gippsland has a population of 26,907 and is the largest urban area within the City of Latrobe, which also includes Moe/Newborough, Morwell and Churchill. Glengarry is a small rural community / dormitory suburb a few kilometres north of Traralgon. To the east, Rosedale is part of Wellington Shire. We have seen an influx of tree-changers, and, at the same time, an outward movement of young people, mainly to Melbourne. The district includes some highly productive farmland including dairy and beef cattle, and a forestry industry with the ever-present electricity power stations and their adjacent coal mines. Major government departments have a presence in the area.

Of the total population of Traralgon, which is 26,907, there are 11,199 (42%) who identify as Christian. 794 of these indicated an affiliation with the Uniting Church. The number identifying as Uniting Church in Glengarry and Rosedale are 59 and 73 respectively. Compared to the wider population, the congregation has a lack of younger participants with a bias towards the older generations and is predominantly Anglo-Celtic which is the majority ethnic group within the local community.

The areas of stress and pain for the wider community: family violence, housing availability, housing affordability, food security, mental health, drug and alcohol issues, the dis-connectedness arising from COVID-19 lockdowns and recent increases in the cost of living, interest rates, etc.,

A growing issue is the different perspectives and pressures with the ongoing operation of coal-fired power stations. The expected remaining operating life of these significant economic contributors to the Latrobe Valley appears to shorten every day, bringing great uncertainty to many, and an unknown future in a zero-carbon emission society. Opal Paper is a significant employer in the region, with some questions of its future. There is a high level of building activity and an expanding housing construction program, with extensive land development.

Ways we connect, serve or partner: Mainly music, Play group, Get Together, Neighbouring Early Learning Centre, garden areas informally used by local residents for walking through or as a safe place for children to play, use of buildings in fellowship: eg, Narcotics Anonymous, occasional catering for large events, EVOLVE - intergenerational worship and fellowship time.

Community facilities:

There are plenty of state and church run schools and numerous pre-schools, kindergartens and early learning centres with access to TAFE campuses and Federation University. Most welfare agencies have an office in Traralgon. Latrobe Regional Hospital is a major facility. There are many regional service clubs, music, special interest groups, aged care and sporting facilities.

Yarram, Devon North, Binginwarri

St Andrew's Yarram: 105 Commercial Rd, Yarram

St Luke's Devon North: 686 Tarra Valley Rd, Devon North

St John's Binginwarri – 2 Binginwarri School Rd, Binginwarri PO Box 250, Yarram 3971

Please note – information taken from a profile dated 26/08/2010 and will be updated.

SECTION 2 – MISSION DIRECTION

Goal: To know, live, share and enjoy the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Objectives: To strive for an understanding and love of the gospel so that we and those around us will want to live lives in service to God and others. To encourage a willingness to share our faith and speak positively of the church. To maintain the strong involvement of young people in camping and conference programs. To rationalise property, freeing up capital for missional use. The Yarram Uniting Church Parish has carried the gospel to the district for 150 years through many difficulties and disappointments with faith and devotion. We are optimistic, flexible and resilient. The church maintains a self-sufficient ministry to the people of the district and contributes significantly to the life of the local community. There are 80 confirmed members with 68 baptised, 15 in association and 35 adherents. The 17 members of the Church Council meets bi-monthly.

SECTION 3 - CONTEXT

The Yarram district is a rural area with dairying, beef and sheep, forestry and some retirement 'sea/tree change' people. We are small towns with an aging but resilient population and a strong sense of community. There are 5 primary and one secondary school, access to a regional hospital and nursing home, child-care and kindergartens.