



SECTION 1 — BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 Placement Name: Belmont Uniting Church (Presbytery of Port Phillip West)

1.2 Please list congregations/agencies names below

- Belmont Uniting Church

1.3 Profile approved by Church Council/Governing Body 21 March 2023

1.4 Primary purpose of placement:

To support the witness and worship life of the congregation as it develops two new approaches to mission:

- by reaching out to retirement communities
- working to create an inclusive community where all are able and encouraged to participate.

1.5 Suitable for: Minister of the Word Ordinand Deacon Pastor

1.6 Time fraction: 100%

1.7 Term:

Undefined up to 10 years (See Reg 2.7.3(a)) Yes No

Fixed Term:Years

Initial Term reviewed in:Years

This profile should be prepared by the Congregation(s) or appointing body in consultation with Presbytery. It is specifically designed to assist in the placement process but it can also be used as a record of mission planning. Sections 1, 2 & 3 of this profile will be uploaded to the VicTas website.

Contents

- Section 1: Basic Information
- Section 2: Mission Direction
- Section 3: Context
- Section 4: People and Activities – to be completed by each congregation in the placement.
- Section 5: Joint Congregations – to be completed if more than one congregation in the placement.
- Section 6: Working Relationships
- Section 7: New Minister – this section contains a list of mission and pastoral activities which are also listed on Minister's Personal profiles
- Section 8: Presbytery – to be completed by Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee.
- Section 9: Terms of Placement

Enclosures

Please mark all the documents attached to the profile:

- Floor plan of residence
- Financial information including a copy of last year's Financial Statement and financial projections
- Position descriptions of relevant ministers
- Others

SECTION 2 — MISSION DIRECTION

2.1 What is the Vision statement and/or Mission priorities of the placement (or of the individual congregations)

Assist in growing a community where all people feel welcome and can share together in worship, service and faith development

2.2 Date adopted by Church Council: 21 March 2023

2.3 Provide a short description of the placement/congregation(s)

Aging, but vibrant and committed congregation in a central location. Open to new ways to engage with our local community. Church Council is supported by active Committees. There is an active network of pastoral visitors. A high level of respect is given to leadership roles. A significant percentage of members are engaged in groups and activities, including leadership roles in worship. The congregation is generous with fundraising and supporting wider mission activities.

2.4 What Church Style best describes the congregation(s)? (See [Church Style Document](#))

Combines elements of "Pastoral Church" and "Program Church"

2.5 How has the placement/congregation(s) changed over the last 5 years?

- a. Cessation of part-time Pastoral Worker role following retirement of incumbent
- b. Aging congregation, but membership has remained steady as UCA members moving into retirement villages join congregation
- c. COVID-19 restrictions resulted in reduction of level of social activity conducted by congregation; however congregation also proved very accepting of creative ways of continuing to engage in worship and mission (eg. Zoom worship services; drive-through fund raising; many members moved to electronic giving for weekly offerings)
- d. News ways of engaging with the community have been trialled, including:
 - i. Art Display (funded by City of Greater Geelong as part of Seniors Month)
 - ii. Electronic cookbook
 - iii. Remembrance Day service established
 - iv. Blue Christmas Service
- e. Large-scale fundraising for support of charitable programs scaled down to smaller events requiring less person-power; (e.g partnering with Uniting Emergency Relief to provide a hall and staffing for a regular Book Fair)

2.6 What are the congregation(s)/placement's goals?

1. to assist the congregation develop its vision and appetite for mission
2. to support members in identifying their gifts, and encouraging them to use those gifts
3. providing worship leadership and pastoral care
4. help the congregation to be a community where the gospel is lived and proclaimed

2.7 What are the next Strategic Steps to achieving those goals?

- a. work with the Worship Committee, lay worship leaders and children's ministry leaders to normalise intergenerational worship practices within the worship life of the congregation (including using universal design principles)
- b. work with the Pastoral Care Committee to ensure that pastoral care and support is provided to members
- c. to actively connect with people moving into and living in retirement communities
- d. offering events for children and families
- e. growing the congregation's social media profile

Notes: the congregation's membership has remained stable due to the number of UCA members (and others) who have moved into local retirement communities, or retired to Belmont. Members of this group have commented favourably about their experience of joining the congregation, and about the style and type of activities offered. However, this has been casual growth. During COVID lockdowns, members living in retirement communities shared newsletters and other resources with their neighbours, resulting in the congregation gaining several new members. It was realised that this is a mission opportunity that should be explored.

- We view “working with older people” as supporting older members to express and share their faith with those around them, particularly those living in retirement communities. We do NOT envisage the role as providing chaplaincy to retirement communities.
- Older members are also interested in learning how to share their faith with their families and grandchildren
- There is a group of older members residing at Kalkee Age Care, who meet weekly for prayer and worship, lead by members of the congregation. Support for this group is a priority.

The congregation ran an Easter-themed craft and activities morning, advertised by FaceBook and local radio (Rhema FM), and through personal invitations. Around 40 people attended. We want to continue and develop these events as a way of building connections with children and families, and inviting them to share in the faith life of the congregation.

Universal design principles are an approach to designing products and environments that are “usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.” In exploring and trialling intergenerational worship ideas with a focus on engaging children and families, it was realised that other members required assistance to participate in worship, and that different approaches may be in conflict or duplicating effort (e.g. disability plans, inclusive language, literacy, dietary requirements, etc).

Universal design principles provide a structured approach to creating an inclusive environment. Different options can be tested, then normalised. The process supports making small, positive changes. Actions taken include: changing the processional Bible for a smaller, lightweight version, allowing for both children and older members to carry it; obtaining a shorter paschal candle (children were unable to see the top of the candle to light it); providing options and activities in the children’s program to support children with different learning and sensory needs; obtaining funding for an improved projection system. The congregation is just beginning this journey; however there is a long-standing commitment within the congregation that we move forward together, and universal design principles offer a way of shaping the discussion needed and setting priorities.

SECTION 3 — CONTEXT

3.1 Describe the communities in which this placement is located (Mission context).

- Belmont is a suburb with over 15000 people (2021 Census). The 3216 postcode includes the adjoining suburbs of Highton, Grovedale, Waurin Ponds and Marshall.
- 22% are aged 19 and under; 14% are aged 70+. The median age is 34.
- The percentage of people holding qualifications equal or higher than Cert III are higher than both Victorian and Australian averages.
- 79% were born in Australia, compared to 65% across Victoria. 21.2% reported having both parents born overseas, compare to 41.3% across Victoria.
- 49% described themselves as having no religion; 4.1% (614) identified as belonging to the Uniting Church.
- 16.6% of those employed are working in hospitals, education (primary and higher), or social assistance services.
- Median weekly income is slightly lower than average.
- Available housing consists primarily of separate houses, semi-detached houses or townhouses. Less than 1% of housing consists of flats or apartments, compared to 12.1% across Victoria.
- 60.5% of households are families; 34% of households are single/lone person households.

3.2 How does your congregation reflect or vary from the age, and ethnic mix of your local community?

The congregation reflects the community in regard to education and employment (current/historical), and ethnicity.

The congregation does not reflect the community in regard to the age of members.

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

Opportunities: centrally located in Geelong with excellent access to schools, health services and community facilities.

Pain points: housing affordability; limited supply of housing

3.4 List ways in which you connect with, serve, or partner with people in your wider community?

- Welcome Mat – congregation outreach program to isolated community members
- Accommodation Project – assistance to young, single mothers and children moving to Geelong (partnered with Salvation Army housing assistance; funded by congregation)
- Uniting – food collection for local Uniting Emergency Relief; Book Fairs
- Thanksgiving projects – support to local charitable and community groups through donations of handmade knitted goods and quilts, money and other items (e.g. Barwon Valley School chaplaincy; Cottage by the Sea; Anam Cara House; Geelong Hospital Neo-natal Ward)

3.5 What schools/agencies/institutions are in your local communities?

Belmont Primary School	Oberon Primary School
Roslyn Primary School	Belmont High School
Christian College	Clairvaux College
Barwon Valley School	Alexander Thompson Pre-school
Marcus Oldham College	Deakin University (Waurin Ponds Campus)
Epworth Hospital	Kalkee and Nangatta aged care
Belmont Library	Barwon Valley Activity Centre
Leisure Link Aquatic Centre	South Barwon Football & Netball Club
Vision Australia	Geelong Lawn Tennis Club