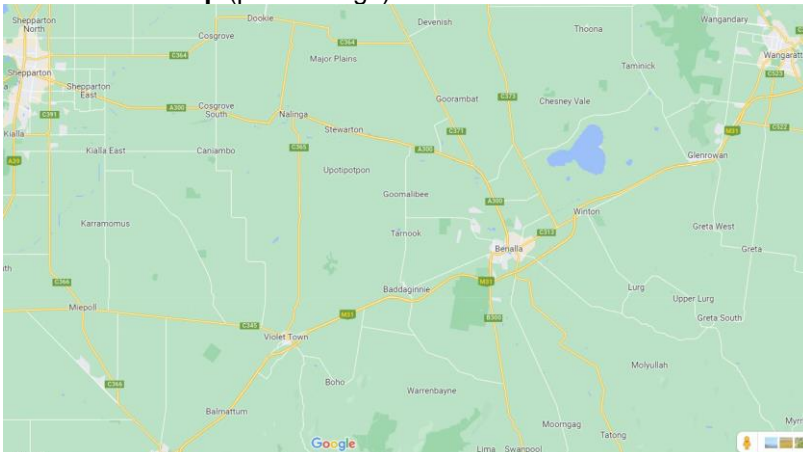




## A Placement Profile

<b>A1 Presbytery</b>	North East Victoria Presbytery		
<b>A2 Name of Placement</b>	Benalla Cluster		
<b>A3 Placement city/suburb/town</b>	Benalla and District		
<b>A4 Church/Office location(s)</b>	35 Carrier Street, Benalla		
<b>A5 Congregations and agencies associated with this placement</b>	Benalla, Devenish, Goorambat, Swanpool		
<b>A6 Ministry leadership being sought</b>	Specific ministry role:	<input type="text"/>	
	Minister of the Word <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deacon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ministry of Pastor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>A7 Specific details</b>	Additional placement <input type="checkbox"/>	Replacement placement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Full Time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/>	Time fraction	<input type="text"/>
	Earliest Start Date:	1/07/2023	
<b>A8 Placement term</b>	Undefined <input type="checkbox"/>	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" value="5"/>
<b>A9 To be completed by Presbytery, with reasons given on page 11:</b>	Is permission sought to advertise? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Is a Priority Placement recommended? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>A10 Contact Person</b>	<input type="text"/>		
<b>A11 Email address</b>	<input type="text"/>		
<b>A12 Website</b>	Under Development		
<b>A13 Social Media</b>	<input type="text"/>		
<b>A14 Google map link</b>	<a href="https://goo.gl/maps/gn1TtZbofzqGgKv7">https://goo.gl/maps/gn1TtZbofzqGgKv7</a>		

### A15 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.**

Worship is the central activity for all of our communities. While our morning services are traditional, we are always open to new opportunities. We have several skilled worship leaders who enjoy sharing the responsibility of leading worship, and we are looking to develop a team approach to worship. Alongside our traditional morning worship services, we have a participatory, intergenerational worship experience (Sharing the Journey), each fortnight on Sundays at 5, which includes a shared meal. We also have responsibility for leading worship in 3 aged care facilities. We are looking for a minister who is interested in helping us to develop the concept of "team" in our worship life, rather than a minister who "does everything".

We have a strong history of being a part of our local community through our Friday Lunch programme, Community Garden, Pancake Day, Fete and Christmas Market. As part of our recent Mission Study, we developed a Mission Action Plan for each congregation in the cluster. A key part of thinking is: how can we continue to grow our relationship with the local neighbourhood? As part of this, we are beginning to recognise the importance of doing things with the community rather than for it. We are looking for a minister who can help us to develop our thinking so that we might offer more appropriate responses to the community.

The Friday Lunch programme has been operating for many years, offering a free lunch to anyone who wants to come. This provides opportunities for many who otherwise live and eat alone, to share a table and some much needed conversation. While it has been a UC initiative, since Covid, volunteers from the Anglican Church and Salvation Army have joined. One expectation is that our minister will eat with our guests, and the join the conversation.

The Community Garden, based on a dedicated portion of the Benalla church property, has also been running for several years. It is open to anyone in the community, and produce is free for anyone who needs it. The congregation recognise that there is scope to develop this ministry further through developing relationships with other interest groups in Benalla such as the Benalla Sustainable Futures Group. We would like our minister to get to know our volunteers, and help us to engage in conversations in the community.

We are also looking to expand on our existing interest-based activities such as Yarners. One idea raised in our Mission Study was the exploration of creating "warm" or "cool" rooms for community activities during cold or hot weather for those living alone and/or those for whom increasing power bills are an issue. We would expect our minister to visit such activities from time to time, and so get to know these communities.

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

Each community, as part of our Mission Action Plan, is exploring ways to be part of the local community, such as linking in with existing men's and women's' conversation/health groups (Devenish/Goorambat). The Benalla congregation determined that it will continue to develop its relationship with its community through continuing to develop the Community Garden, and by creating safe spaces for vulnerable people to meet for fun activities.

The cluster plans to continue to develop its pastoral care team, which includes ministry to the Aged Care facilities in town, and to those no longer able to attend worship regularly.

Each worshipping community is now engaging in a conversation aimed at developing its worship life in way that connects meaningfully to its local community by creating special Sundays throughout the year. Benalla has also committed to developing a worship planning team to utilise the skills of the people in the congregation, help support and develop our worship life with the minister.

**B3 Does this placement relate to more than one congregation?**

**If so, provide details on page 7.**

Yes

No



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

The majority are of Anglo origin. We also have a family with Sri Lankan origin and another from Africa.

**B5 What languages are spoken in the life of your:**

Congregation, by		Community, by	
Individuals	Shona, Sinhala	Individuals	
Groups		Groups	

**B6 What languages are spoken by the congregation in worship?**

English

**B7 Describe any involvement your congregation has in covenanting activities.**

A local elder is an active participant in the Benalla congregation, and keeps us informed of local activities.

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

Uniting has a high presence in Shepparton and Wangaratta, but not in Benalla. The nearest UCA School is in Albury.

## G Mission

### G1 List three of your missional activities that your congregations does best?

Friday lunch  
Community Garden  
Sophia – stunning mural in Goorambat church

### G2 What are three missional activities your congregation would like to develop?

Creating safe “warm” or “cool” places (to help with power bills) for fun activities and safe conversation place. (Goorambat and Benalla Mission Action Plans.)  
Community Garden – making stronger contacts with the community, beginning with the Benalla Sustainable Futures Group. (Benalla Mission Action Plan)  
Exploring the potential of creating “special Sundays” that help make connections with our neighbourhoods. Put a stall in the Devenish market. (Devenish and Goorambat).



**G3 How has the congregation changed in the past two years?**

While some of our older members have died, or moved into care, new people are arriving having seen Benalla and District as a great retirement place. (Census shows 10% increase over 10 years). There are notably fewer people in worship, with the pandemic making a significant contribution.

A significant number of workers come up from Melbourne during the week to work on the concrete plant and return home on the weekends, but do not worship in town.

The presbytery is offering more opportunities, such as Bibles Studies and training sessions via Zoom. We have the technology and expertise available, and are beginning to take advantage of that opportunity.

The roof of the John Cooper Hall was destroyed in a weather event in January 2023. We are still waiting for repairs to be affected. This has made a significant impact to our “space” for hospitality (funerals) and other activities. There has been a flow on effect on income, particularly money to give away. We are hopeful that repairs will begin soon.

**G4 What changes and developments are anticipated in the next three to five years?**

We will be working through our Mission Action Plan (2023). This will be provided by the JNC before a conversation takes place.



## J The Community

### J1 Describe the wider community in which your ministry is located.

Benalla and District offers a great mix of town, village and rural living, with a total population of 14,500. Benalla township is situated 212 kms north of Melbourne on the Hume Freeway and train line between Sydney and Melbourne, and is the service centre for the district. The proximity to Melbourne and excellent transport routes is making our district an attractive place for retirees looking for a tree change, and with cheaper land prices, an attractive location for medium and even some heavy industry.

With the unemployment rate currently 3.4%, work appears relatively easy to find at this time, with nearby Shepparton and Wangaratta offering the possibility of a 30-45 minute commute, as well as some of the larger shopping chains. Farms are dedicated to dairy, beef, lamb and wool production, with wheat, canola and lucerne crops being the most commonly grown. There is now vast solar farm at Winton feeding into the national grid.

Generally, the community is mono-cultural (Anglo), with small increases in diversity appearing in recent years. The age spread of the population is similar to that of the national average, with the younger age groups not quite as well represented.

Outdoor art (walls, silos etc) is a feature of the area, bringing in tourists and silo art trail followers. The local art gallery is active in promoting local art, and has a great cafeteria. All the usual service clubs, sporting clubs and volunteer emergency service organisations are here.

### J2 What makes this an enjoyable place to live?

There are many attractions to the area, with the Winton Wetlands offering a first people's cultural experience as well as walks, bird watching and camping. Wineries are another great feature of the North East, with snow fields nearby, rail trails for walking and cycling. The Winton motor racing circuit offers many events for the petrol heads! There is plenty of accommodation available for visiting family and friends, as well as free camping spots to find. The Broken River provides some fishing spots, with many more a short drive away. Murals add interest to a walk around the town, and the main street of Benalla offers plenty of coffee shops to meet with friends, and the locals are always up for a chat! With plenty of fresh air and low traffic numbers, Benalla makes a peaceful change to city living, while providing for most families' needs. With state subsidised train fares and several trains a day to and from Melbourne, a day in the city costs as little as \$9.40.

### J3 What are the points of stress and pain in the wider community?

Benalla and District experiences many of the same stresses experienced in most rural communities. There is nothing that really stands out as unique, but we provide a list here:

An ageing population that is stretching medical and other services.

Mental health – loneliness, anxiety, youth suicide.

Growing number of low socio-economic families relying on Emergency Food Relief.

Older single women doing it hard – available services can't find enough employees.

Those who are homeless are living in their cars, while the overall housing shortage is causing rental pressure.

Domestic violence is also on the rise here as it is in so many places.

### J4 How closely does your congregation reflect the demographics of your local area?

While the district generally is skewed towards an older, mono-cultural demographic, our congregations tend to be older. The Sharing the Journey group (5pm Sundays) is deliberately intergenerational, and is attracting people who may not otherwise attend worship.

### J5 What community facilities are present in the local area?

There are 3 Aged Care Facilities, a good hospital, several Child Care centres, Kindergartens, Primary and High Schools. Many sports are represented, and Benalla boasts 2 drama companies! Men's shed and "Woodies" (woodworkers only).