



## PLACEMENT PROFILE

### SECTION 1 – BASIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 Placement Name(s): Minister of the Word
- 1.2 Please list congregations/agencies names below
- The Avenue Uniting Church, Blackburn
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.3 Profile approved by Church Council/Governing Body 23 / 01 / 2019
- 1.4 Primary purpose of placement:  
Ministry of the Word in a congregational setting
- 1.5 Suitable for (bold all that apply): **Minister of the Word** / Deacon / Ordinand/ Pastor
- 1.6 Time fraction: 100%
- 1.7 Term:
- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Undefined up to 10 years (See Reg 2.7.3(a)) | <u>X</u>                          |
| Fixed Term:                                 | <u>                    </u> Years |
| Initial Term reviewed in:                   | <u>                    </u> Years |

This profile should be prepared by the Congregation(s)/ agency 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.

#### 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 9: Presbytery – to be completed by Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee.

Section 10: 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)

Our vision is to be a vital Christian faith community that is growing in the understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus, and their relevance in today's world.

Outward looking and compassionate, welcoming and accepting of all.

Valuing diversity, respecting one another's gifts, experiences and needs, caring for one another, and our planet.

Engaging with others in the wider community to work for justice and to offer opportunities for people to live fuller and more satisfying lives.

Respectful of tradition but not bound by the past; open to new understandings and practices in a rapidly changing society.

**2.2 Date adopted 11/11/18**

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

We are situated in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne with approx. 200 persons on the pastoral care roll - an older and enthusiastic congregation with a few younger families.

We have a varied reach into the community through programs such as Music Together, Play group and the Quest Programme as well as a well-attended Sunday Service.

We also join with our friends in St Thomas the Apostle (Catholic Church) for Lenten studies.

Members of the congregation also gather for regular social functions.

Intergenerational worship is a feature of Sunday Services with consideration of all age groups.

We see ourselves as being a thoughtful and inquiring congregation willing to explore new theological ideas and their practical application in our shared worship, education and social justice.

At the Avenue we have an Office Manager and a Pastor, both part time. The Pastor works very closely with the minister and in particular is focussed on children and family's ministry along with Community engagement

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

The congregation has aged but remains engaged and supports new ideas.

A few families have come into the congregation, some with children.

Intergenerational worship is a feature of our ministry, with children remaining within the worship space throughout.

Saturday night church, Men's group, Avenue Singers have run their course and are no longer functioning.

A play group for young children has been established. We have community family outreach activities at specific times e.g. The Angel Project, Parenting workshop and Christmas and Easter programmes with Blackburn Pre School.

The Quest Programme (adult education) has attracted new participants and is gaining reputation within and beyond the congregation through word of mouth and the website.

We have engaged in Team Ministry with a Pastor for Children and Families and Community Engagement. This has grown into a successful team.

In 2018 the Audio-Visual equipment in the church was extensively upgraded.

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

To provide a strong Christian presence and witness within the polity of the Uniting Church in Australia.

To be a sustainable, caring and vital community of faith providing diverse and life-long opportunities for the spiritual and personal growth of people of all ages.

To continue to develop outreach to and ministry with young families.

To further develop a diverse range of worship opportunities and styles.

To be a community which cares pastorally for those who are part of or linked to our congregation.

To provide opportunities for people to expand their understanding of the Christian faith and related issues.

To foster and further develop Christian community.

To promote social justice within our congregation and in the wider community

## **2.6 What are the next Strategic Steps to achieving those goals?**

The congregation adopted a Mission Plan at its AGM on 11 November 2018, as the latest iteration of a rolling strategic plan which is reviewed every three years. This plan focuses on the key areas of Growing in faith, Building Community, Hospitality, and Sharing and Resourcing for Mission and Ministry.

In implementing the strategic plan, the congregation has relied on initiatives coming from committed and enthusiastic members rather than a top-down imposition of programs from the Church Council. The Council has seen itself as an empowering and facilitating body and not a directing and controlling one. This strategic approach has resulted in our most notable current activities, such as the annual Angel Project, Music Together, the Quest adult education program, the vigil in support of asylum seekers and our inter-generational approach to ministry. Where missional activities have ceased (see 2.4), we honour them for their missional value while they were in operation; we see them as in suspension rather than abandoned, and take the experience as part of our learning rather than as evidence of failure. We are alert to possibilities and potential for furthering our strategic goals, but we are also aware that we need committed people to take any activities forward as their work in mission, so that we are not left with a series of aspirational statements unsupported by action.

In addition, the congregation is the beneficiary of a Synod grant (IOMF) to part fund our Children and Family and Community Engagement pastor. Initially a “pilot program” this work has been increasing in its impact as we work to live the Gospel in our community, and we plan for this to continue as the position has recently been funded for a further three years.

The congregation and church council are not prescriptive about what initiatives will further achieve our goals; rather we believe that with an encouraging and supportive culture, aided by the wisdom, experience and new ideas of the Minister in placement, we will make continual progress towards achieving our goals. We live in the words of the Basis of Union- a pilgrim people, always on the way.

## **SECTION 3 – CONTEXT**

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

The Avenue UC is located in the leafy eastern Melbourne suburb of Blackburn and draws its community from Blackburn and the surrounding suburbs. Blackburn is well equipped with public transport and other services including a variety of schools, aged care facilities, shopping centres etc. There is also a small commercial zone.

It is also known for the Gardiners Creek, Blackburn Lake and associated green spaces, as well as protected series of environment landscapes.

As at 2016 the population was 13,940 with the median age 40 and 66% born in Australia (7% born in China). Of that population 55% are working full time and 51% are families with children.

The links provided by public transport, excellent schools and amenities make it attractive to young families.

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

The congregation is predominantly of Anglo heritage but also includes members from different ethnic backgrounds.

The congregation is much older than the average of 40 in the 2016 census

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

The Blackburn community in which we live experiences similar issues to areas of similar demographics such as pressure for high quality Government schools, increasing house prices and percentage of working families. This leads to time and financial pressures, family and mental health issues.

With our aging congregation we see the stress faced with downsizing, aged care placements and accessing health services often leading to dislocation from local communities and support.

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

- Music Together (pre-school age)
- Play group (pre-school age)
- Angel Project - a family-based community activity leading up to Christmas including craft, story in church, music, cooking and a shared meal.
- Close relationship with Blackburn Preschool (on church property)
- Uniting Connections (an ongoing working relationship)
- Quest (Adult Education Program)
- Members of the congregation are supporters of the Outer Eastern Asylum Seekers Support Network

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

**Schools:** Laburnum PS, Blackburn Lake PS, Blackburn High School, Blackburn PS, Box Hill High School, Kingswood College, St Thomas the Apostle Primary School, Nunawading Christian College (SDA), Our Lady of Sion College

**Kindergartens and child care centres:** Blackburn Pre-school (adjacent to and with close links to The Avenue), Pope Road Kindergarten, Taralye Kindergarten and Oral Centre for hearing-impaired, Blackburn Children's Centre, Guardian Early Learning, StarFish children's centre.

**Agency:** Uniting Connections- 48 Blackburn Road (tenant of the congregation and also having a close relationship)

**Churches (other than Uniting):** St Thomas the Apostle Catholic (with whom we have had shared Lenten studies), Nunawading Seventh Day Adventist, Blackburn Presbyterian, St Alfred's Anglican, St John's Anglican, New Hope Baptist, One Church (Church of Christ)

**Other faiths:** Sikh temple (Gurdwara) and Islamic centre

**Aged Care facilities:** Regis Lake Park, Crofton House, Covenant House, AdventCare

**Shopping centres:** Blackburn Station & South Blackburn shops, Forest Hill Chase, Box Hill Market