

## Intergenerational Ministry (Children & Families) report to Synod 2022

2021 was another year unlike any other (apart from the year that preceded it). Whereas there may have been a degree of optimism as 2020 drew to an end, the reality of 2021 was a rollercoaster ride of hope followed by disappointment followed by hope followed by disappointment followed by hope...that things could return to a degree of normalcy. 2022 thus far has seen a cautious edging toward a new normal for intergenerational ministry with children and their families, albeit with many twists and turns along the way.

Looking back, though, there has been much to celebrate across 2021 with regard to the contribution of the *Intergenerational Ministry (Children & Families)* role to the life of the Synod (and beyond). Highlights have included...

- Chapters contributed to two books - the UK-published [Messy Discipleship: Messy Church perspectives on growing faith](#) and US-published [Engage All Generations: a strategic toolkit for creating intergenerational faith communities](#) - and the hosting of launch events for each book
- Launch events for each of the above books that led to both a Messy Discipleship Huddle series and an Engage All Generations Huddle series. Each Huddle series comprised 3 x 1-hour sessions in which groups of up to 10 participants (ministers, pastors, and other leaders) engaged with one another around the contents of the respective books. Overall, there were 24 individual book-focused Huddles hosted with around 170 participants (from VicTas Presbyteries, other Synods and even overseas).
- Huddles to assist ministry agents for the Lent to Pentecost and Advent seasons. Similar in format to the Messy Discipleship and Engage All Generations Huddles, these were also very well subscribed – 18 Huddles in all with around 130 participants.
- Increased collaboration with-in the Priorities, Focus & Advocacy stream (e.g. with the New & Renewing and Young Adult roles) across the eLM unit (e.g. with the Intercultural Leadership Development role) and with Presbyteries (e.g. with Presbytery eLM ministers) and developing of further support for Messy Church, Playgroup and Kids Hope leaders.
- Growing engagement with Assembly, with a particular focus on intergenerational ministry and Safe Church. The spearheading of the discussion around the intercultural/intergenerational intersection and discipleship with-in the Synod has also impacted the Assembly more widely, predominantly through the Assembly Resourcing and Communications Units.
- Regular dissemination of resources through the [Children & Families fb page](#), the monthly Children & Families Update and the ad hoc Intergenerational Update. The Children & Families fb page has grown to 1,200+ followers and comprises daily posts, the distribution list for the Children & Families Update now includes close to 6,000 people and the Intergenerational Update is sent to 1,300+ recipients (interestingly, of whom a third are from overseas).
- The time since the last Synod meeting has been incredibly productive and efficient – significantly due to the increased willingness of many to engage via Zoom and the capacity to work from home. Greater space away from the office environment has enabled more efficient and effective ministry than would otherwise have been the case.

Intentional collaboration has still been possible, and a new model of working has been embraced that, ideally, can be maintained into the future. Whilst a Covid-downside has been reduced physical presence across the Synod, the upside has been a significant increase in on-line capacity and connectivity. Going

forward may we see the best of both worlds – greater physical presence and effective on-line engagement!

Looking ahead for the remainder of 2022, key goals are related to connecting, coaching and collaboration. As congregations, in particular, seek to re-connect with the wider community and re-build relationships (both internally and externally) an intentionally intergenerational mind-set is more important than ever. As presbyteries exercise their responsibilities, it is imperative that they pay greater heed to the importance of intergenerationality. As a whole Synod, our challenge together is to become a more genuinely intergenerational church.

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