



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

## Understanding the Strategic Priorities (2016-2022)

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**Supporting three specific  
areas of Church life**



Following Christ,  
walking together  
as First and Second Peoples,  
seeking community, compassion  
and justice for all creation



The Synod is committed to working with three particular *Strategic Priorities* over the coming years. These *Priorities* come from a period of careful discernment and arise from the Synod asking “Where do we hear and see the Spirit of God calling us to new life and hope?”

The *Priorities* emphasise three areas of life and ministry through which we hear the Spirit calling us. They will inform and guide the planning, dreaming, hoping and resourcing of the Synod.

I invite you to explore how the Spirit is speaking through the *Priorities* to your own congregation or gathered community. This booklet will help you both listen for the Spirit and help you begin to act out that listening.

May you respond to these *Priorities* in ways that lead to continuing new life and hope. I commend the *Priorities* and this booklet to you.



**Sharon Hollis**  
**Moderator**  
**Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania**  
**November 2017**

*Understanding the Strategic Priorities (2016-2022)* is one in a series of four booklets that explores key elements of the Synod’s Strategic Framework. The Framework seeks to support an environment that invites discussion, provokes questions and gives intentional focus for discerning the renewing work of the Spirit in our day.

To enhance the explorations of this booklet, it is helpful to read the other booklets: *An Introduction to the Vision and Mission Principles* (March 2017), *Supporting Information on the Statements of Intent* (July 2017) and *Engaging the Areas of Focus* (November 2017).

This booklet, *Understanding the Strategic Priorities (2016-2022)*, identifies the three *Strategic Priorities* adopted by the Synod in 2016. It is hoped that these *Priorities* become interwoven into the life of a vibrant and diverse church.

The inside back cover of this booklet contains the *Vision and Mission Principles*, the *10 Statements of Intent*, the three *Strategic Priorities* and the four *Areas of Focus*.

### **On the pages that follow...**

This booklet explores each of the three *Strategic Priorities*. Reflections and exercises are offered to help individuals and groups discover how they can engage with each *Priority* in their own context. The Synod hopes that this resource, together with all the resources in the Strategic Framework booklet series, assists the conversations and actions of everyone across the Church.



The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has adopted the following three *Strategic Priorities* over the period 2016-2022:

1. **ministries which foster diverse gathered communities of renewal, Christian practice and mission;**
2. **culturally diverse mission and ministry;**
3. **mission and ministry with children, youth, their families and young people.**

Through these three *Strategic Priorities*, the Synod seeks to encourage sparks of passion and faithfulness in several new areas. The Synod believes it is vitally important that the *Priorities* are supported, resourced and strengthened to shape our church in the years to come.

The Synod will work with these three *Strategic Priorities*, understanding that its engagement is:

- i. complementary to the adopted Strategic Framework, comprising the *Vision and Mission Principles*, and the *Statements of Intent*; and
- ii. informed by an ongoing conversation guided by four *Areas of Focus*.

These important related components are described in three companion booklets:

- *Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles* (March 2017);
- *Supporting information on the Statements of Intent* (July 2017); and
- *Engaging the Areas of Focus* (November 2017)

*“All our listening, our research and our prayerful discernment has led us to recommend three specific areas that need intentional focus.”*

- Major Strategic Review (MSR) Report to the June 2016 Synod.

## **An invitation to explore the *Strategic Priorities***

This booklet briefly explores the purpose and scope of the Synod's three *Strategic Priorities*.

Your gathered community is invited to discern how these *Priorities* speak to you about ministry and mission. How do we listen to the voices of people from these priority areas? What can we change in our decision-making processes, our leadership and our expressions of church life and witness as a consequence of these *Priorities*?

In your discernment, you may be affirmed and challenged. You will be called upon to be open to God's Spirit and to hear both familiar and fresh words. You are likely to need a discernment partner (perhaps a gifted leader from beyond your immediate community) to walk alongside you, as you listen for new

voices that are ready to speak, and for voices that are struggling to be heard.

This is your invitation to be open to discerning the call of God's Spirit. It is a journey of planning, visioning and shaping the path of faithful pilgrimage. God's Spirit has woven us together. That same Spirit will lead us to be God's Church – a community gathered into the tapestry of God's loving purpose for the world.

# Why adopt three *Strategic Priorities*?

**Strategic Priorities** give intentional focus and support to three areas across the life of the Church, where sparks of passion and faithfulness can be discerned. These *Priorities* acknowledge the growing and changing vitality of church life. The *Priorities* invite the Church to proactively support this vitality, so that these sparks of life might continue to grow into vibrant voices, perspectives and communities of faith that help shape our Church life and witness.

**Strategic Priorities** are a lens through which we may discern how we do things and which activities we undertake. The Synod will work to shape its ministries and activities to support the needs of these *Priorities*. Other councils of the Church will consider how the *Priorities* can be supported and nurtured in their own contexts. It is important that these areas of mission and ministry are supported, resourced and strengthened to shape our church in the 21st century.

**Strategic Priorities** invite an openness to change. Giving intentional focus and support to these three *Priorities* may challenge our present ways of being church. As new voices propose alternative expressions and amended ways of journeying as a pilgrim people, we may be called to change our processes and structures. As the Church encourages and nurtures an increasingly vibrant diversity, we may be challenged to change our practices and witness of faith.

*The three Strategic Priorities seek to encourage vital voices, perspectives and communities of practice that can help reshape our church in the 21st century.*

**Strategic Priorities** are a response to a discerned concern. The experiences of a number of people in these three areas include feelings of marginalisation and a struggle for recognition and resourcing. Such discouragement risks contribution and growth. The *Priorities* will ensure those experiencing marginalisation are actively included and encouraged.

**Strategic Priorities** are not intended for application in an exclusive sense. We seek to focus intentionally on these important areas of *strategic priority*. This focus does not diminish or challenge the validity or vibrancy of existing life and witness across the Church. Faithful participation in God's mission will continue to be lived out in diverse ways. The *Strategic Priorities* will be three among a number of areas where the Synod directs its resources.

*"I really believe that as we go into the next three years that diversity of cultures, diversity of ages, will become one of the pillars upon which the Church will find new life and new hope."*

- Robin (workshop participant), March 2017



# Working with the *Strategic Priorities*

## Building Connection

While people and groups representative of the three *Priority* areas are championed to varying degrees across the Church, these voices are often missing in our councils. These voices are frequently overlooked in our planning and decision making. Focusing on the *Strategic Priorities* seeks to enhance the life of the Church and foster signs of encouraging growth. These will not be the only activities we undertake, but working proactively to build connections with these priority groups is an important emphasis at this time across the life and witness of the Church.

The specific approaches we use might vary. However, the primary desire is engagement, support and connection with people and communities within these three *Strategic Priorities*.

## Overcoming the barriers – supporting diversity

Differences in cultural, generational and missional perspectives can be enriching. They can also be challenging. In Australia,

a particular form of western culture and tradition has dominated. For many, this western perspective is so dominant that those who live within it do not realise their own predisposition. For others, this dominant perspective is encountered as foreign or oppressive. A focus on the three *Strategic Priorities* aims to overcome barriers (stemming from cultural diversity, generational change, and differing missional expression). The Church's participants in God's mission will be strengthened by a diverse life of vibrancy and faithfulness.

## Woven into our life together

Ultimately, our hope is for the *Strategic Priorities* to be woven throughout our life as Church. It is hoped that we see this within our gathered communities, and in the relationships and responsibilities of our councils, boards, committees, institutions and schools. The *Priorities* will be present in: our planning and decision-making, the questions we ask, the voices we listen for, the attention we give, and the faithful life and witness we express.

## INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP EXERCISE

Read Acts 2:1-21

In verses 1-12, the Holy Spirit overcomes the barrier of language so that all hear in their own language voices 'declaring the wonders of God' (v.11).

What language barriers do we need help from the Spirit to overcome today?

Think about the different language barriers of culture, education and socio-economic status, as well as the barriers that can exist between generations.

Consider the ways we experience, or perhaps overlook, such barriers within and beyond the Church.

In the words of the Prophet Joel (v.17-21), the Spirit is poured out on 'all people'. This includes sons and daughters, old and young, and even lowly servants.

How might the Spirit help your community to live out being:

- a fellowship that builds connections and overcomes barriers;
- a fellowship that embraces 'all people' across the divides of culture, age, gender and social status?

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

## Ministries which foster diverse gathered communities of renewal, Christian practice and mission

A growing number of gathered communities across the Church are seeking new ways of 'being church' in the 21st century. Such new forms of church often involve engagement with people for whom faith and church is a new experience. These efforts are typically lay-led and spring from encounters with people within contemporary contexts.

There may be a 'heart burst' of compassionate response to an encounter with the wider community, or a yearning for renewal within existing gathered communities. Such initiatives of new life are a faithful response to the call of Christ. They are typically characterised by love, grace and the building of authentic relationships and community life.

### What might these gathered communities look like?

Consider the following scenarios drawn from those seeking to foster diverse 'renewal, Christian practice and mission':

A 'Messy Church' community, mostly families with young children, begins and grows quickly. It is an expression of church that helps families connect. They value time together and like to contribute where they can. One family now seeks baptism for its adult and younger members.

After a time of volunteering in a local community centre, a few local church members felt called to start a monthly 'meditation and contemplation' service in the centre. The aim was to create a safe space where all people felt welcomed, able to ask questions, and share experiences of faith and life. A growing number of participants – a true 'mixed bag' of people – treasure this time of community as church. The leaders are not certain where it is all heading, but they do feel something valuable is emerging.

A group of young adults have met on a fortnightly basis in one participant's home. They share conversations about life and what following Jesus means. From time-to-time others have joined them, but attendance is variable. They are inspired to adopt and actively support a local initiative of care that helps vulnerable children in a local primary school. The original core of the group is linked with a larger local congregation. But for most of the group, this smaller community is their key experience of church.

A small community is taking shape through a local café social enterprise, run and managed by a local church member. The emerging community is mostly made up of single and stay-at-home mums who love the 'safe' space, the spirit of the place, the friendships, and the conversations about life and faith that have emerged. A gathered community appears to be forming.

Noting that such scenarios are not about 'set formulas', either personally or in a group, explore the following questions:

- What circumstances gave rise to each scenario?
- What did the emerging leader(s) contribute to help grow each scenario?
- What support might such emerging leaders need?
- What would you affirm or challenge about these scenarios as potential expression of Church?

# Honouring success and failure

Leaders exploring new expressions of gathered community would benefit from greater representation in church decision-making, stronger networks of like-minded people, and specific education and support.

They will be strengthened by activities such as:

- a range of training events,
- leadership development in pioneering ministries,
- missional coaching,
- networked sharing of experiences and learnings.

Such leaders and their communities have a valuable contribution to help enrich and shape the life of the Church in the years to come.

These diverse gathered communities are helped by an environment that encourages experimentation. By such encouragement, new initiatives are supported and the experiences of success and failure are honoured. These communities seek to become welcoming spaces where a diversity of 'renewal, Christian practice and mission' is fostered.

These emerging diverse communities need the interest and encouragement of the wider Church.

In particular, our efforts as Church to work with the ten *Statements of Intent* will be important in supporting this exploration.

## LEARN AND SEE FOR YOURSELF

Ask your local presbytery or Synod leaders if they know of local 'experiments' in new ways of being Church. Identify one such gathered community and, where possible, explore the following:

1. Ask to meet with the leadership to hear their story. Ask about their motivations and how their initiative journeyed from the initial idea to action. What are their current joys and challenges?
2. If permissible, visit a typical community gathering that relates to your chosen initiative.
  - What can you learn from your visit?
  - What questions does it raise for you?
  - Is there a way you can encourage or offer practical support to the leaders you met?
  - What does it say to your own community's context?

3. Gather with your group or community and discuss your reflections to questions 1 and 2. 'Dream' together what responses you feel the Spirit may be leading you to make?

Who else might you invite to be part of your conversations and help you further explore your responses?

## SHARE YOUR STORY WITH OTHERS

If you have been considering and/or experimenting with growing your own diverse gathered community, consider sharing your story with others – perhaps with a friend, your faith group, or with your church council or presbytery. You may find encouragement in sharing your story, and others may be encouraged in their own walk of faith.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

### Culturally diverse mission and ministry

In 2017, Rev Apwee Ting, National Assembly Consultant for Multicultural and Cross Cultural Ministry, observed that there are “196 specific language worshipping groups within the Uniting Church in Australia; 28 languages spoken, 12 National Conferences, 59 Intentional Cross Cultural Congregations<sup>1</sup>, and one Korean Presbytery within NSW/ACT”.

Stories of culturally diverse communities are typically journeys of joyful, vibrant and growing congregations. They speak with gladness and appreciation of being part of the Uniting Church. In response, they offer many gifts to the wider church including: an authentic and lively connection to multicultural Australia, the richness of their faith traditions and the giftedness of their people. This *Priority* understands the Church as a network of culturally diverse communities learning to give fuller shape to a life together. This network includes both culturally specific and culturally mixed communities.

Many diverse communities experience a sense of disconnection from decision-making processes. They are often under-represented on decision-making bodies of the Church and may bring a differing approach to communal decision-making that sits uneasily with the Church’s traditional practices. New ways may be needed to support intentional inclusion of culturally diverse communities.

Cultural diversity brings both the enrichment and the challenge of difference. We are all enriched by learning new ways of expression from the range of cultures. We are challenged when new ways differ substantially from those many know and love from their own specific culture. These differences are further complicated by the experiences of the second and third generation migrants, who in various ways live across two or more cultures.

Rev Swee Ann Koh, director of the Synod’s Intercultural unit wrote the following words in May 2017:

“As we move forward into the future we need to move from being a multicultural church to becoming truly intercultural. In a multicultural church, we live alongside each other, in a cross-cultural church, there is some reaching across boundaries, but in an intercultural church, there is respect, mutuality, reciprocity, equity and engagements with other cultures and ethnicities.”

What insights and challenges do Swee Ann’s words suggest to you and to your gathered community?

How might you find ways to listen and learn from the voice of cultures other than your own?

After a time of reflection, slowly pray the prayer on the opposite page.

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<sup>1</sup> An Intentional Cross Cultural Congregation is defined as a single congregation/worshipping group that embraces/has members from more than two cultural/ethnic backgrounds and the dominant culture/ethnicity is no more than 80% of their members.



## A Prayer on Diversity

God of many faces and names,  
You created all people in your image.

We thank you for the amazing diversity of races,  
languages, accents and cultures in this world you  
created.

We thank you for the wonderful diversity reflected  
within the First Peoples and Second Peoples of  
this land and in our church.

We thank you for the blessings and enrichment  
we have received from the rich diversity in the  
Body of Christ.

Forgive us for the sins of racism that's part of our  
history and the pains and sufferings we cause by  
our biases and prejudices.

Forgive us for demonising those who are different  
from us and causing them anguish, distress and  
misery.

Forgive us for remaining in our ethnic silos and  
failing to reach out to other members of the Body  
of Christ.

We pray that in our diversity we will find the unity  
that's given to us in Christ and appreciate the  
gifts that others bring to us.

We pray that we will reach out to those who are  
different from us and see you in the faces of the  
poor, strangers and persecuted.

We pray that we may be transformed and drawn  
into intentional, intercultural relationships and  
community.

Help us to take the steps you call us to take, to  
build a more just, inclusive community, where  
diversity is truly embraced, where difference is  
respected.

In the Name of the Triune God, amen, amen, and  
again we say: Amen!



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Mission and ministry with children, youth, their families and young adults

*“My hope is that we will focus on intergenerational relationships. I think that the whole of people of God includes all ages.”*

- Hannah (Workshop participant), March 2017

Broadly speaking, mission and ministry with children, youth, their families and young adults has declined within the traditional congregations of the Uniting Church over recent decades.

Yet there are small passionate pockets thriving in various contexts across the Church. These vital stories of vibrant life are typically overlooked due to a dominant narrative of decline.

This *Strategic Priority* area of mission and ministry recognises the need to creatively engage and support younger generations and their families. In the past, our church has been blessed by energetic intergenerational life. It is appropriate that we intentionally support and encourage renewal in ways suited to our changing times. This *Priority* acknowledges the potential for such signs of life to shape the Church in the years to come. Younger generations are a contributing and treasured part of the Church today. They are not ‘less-than-full’ members of the church family; rather they have a vital and full contribution to make. It is inadequate to describe our younger generations as the ‘church of the future’.

This *Strategic Priority* recognises that emerging leaders are often poorly networked at a time when they need increased support and encouragement. Gathered communities of younger generations have a passion to explore personal faith and experiences of community. They have changing attitudes and understandings of ‘church the organisation’.

This group is poorly represented in the decision-making bodies of our church, with existing structures and processes sometimes proving to be alien and uninviting. Despite this, many young people are overcoming these obstacles to become an increasingly vital part of the Body of Christ.

The ministry of children is a rich blessing in the life of the Church. Children are not simply to be receivers of adult love and care; they are also distinct contributors to the life of gathered communities. We are reminded that children have a ministry as treasured members of the body of Christ. This *Strategic Priority* seeks to encourage and support that ministry.

*“I hope we make connections between younger people and older people in the congregation so they can ask questions of each other and hopefully learn from each other as well.”*

- Andy (Workshop participant), March 2017

# Children and the Kingdom of God

Children are one of a number of generational groupings embraced in this third *Strategic Priority*. In the following reflection and exercise, attention is given to 'children and the Kingdom of God' as an opportunity to: (i) think about what we can learn from the ministry of children and (ii) what that learning might say to us about this *Strategic Priority* as a whole.

In the gospel of Mark, Jesus teaches his disciples what it means to follow him and seek the Kingdom of God. In such teaching, there are multiple references to children.

For example, Mark 9:33-37 describes an argument between the disciples about 'who was the greatest'. As in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Jesus 'sits down' in the traditional position of a teacher who gathers students for a time of teaching. Pause to read Mark 9:33-37.

In his book *Against the Tide*, Miroslav Volf notes New Testament scholar Judith Gundry's words on Mark 9:33-37:

"Love for the least is the way to the new greatness that should characterise Jesus' disciples ... Rather than suffering neglect on account of their presumed

insignificance, [children] are to be put in the very centre of the community's life and ministry."

Some additional quotes from Gundry's work<sup>2</sup> on children in the Gospels include:

- Mark 10:13-16, "Far from being disqualified ... little children epitomise how to enter the reign of God. They are model participants and recipients ...".
- Matthew 18:1-5, "High status (being the greatest) is gained through childlikeness... and childlikeness is describe as humbleness".
- and returning to Mark 9:33-37, "The welcoming of a little child in Jesus' name is a test of one's openness to Jesus himself. For the little child functions as Jesus himself and God who sent him".

## A TASK FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Take some time to thoughtfully read Mark 9:33-37.

1. Consider and/or discuss any part of the reading that grabs your attention. What do you discern are the key messages in Jesus' teaching?
2. What might it mean, as Judith Gundry suggests, for us as church if children are to be put in the very centre of the community's life and ministry?
3. Considering the various readings and quotes above, what do you feel your gathered community needs to learn from the ministry of children and young people?

4. Some gathered communities rarely have children present. Whether or not this is your experience, what might the teaching of Jesus have to say about our readiness, as disciples and gathered communities, to welcome and share in ministry with children?

## CONSIDERING THIS THIRD STRATEGIC PRIORITY MORE BROADLY:

5. How might this teaching of Jesus relate to this third *Strategic Priority* as a whole?  
What are the implications for our discipleship and the ministry of children, youth, their families and young people in the life of the Church?  
How might we begin to strengthen our church as a more vibrant inter-generational church?

<sup>2</sup> For further reading, refer to the essay by Judith Gundry-Volf, "The Least and the Greatest: Children in the New Testament" in Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 29-60.

# 'One Body, Many Parts'

## Exploring the *Strategic Priorities* through 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27

NOTE – In this exercise, the suggested questions may raise painful or difficult topics. Any group sharing should therefore be done in facilitated contexts where: the gathering is a safe space, respectful listening is practiced, and participation always remains optional.

Paul's letter was written because he had heard that the community of the young church in Corinth was divided by differences of opinion about appropriate Christian priorities and behaviour. He draws upon the image of the body to show that, while members of the community reveal great diversity, they are called in Christ to work together in unity.

### Read Paul's description of the body of Christ from 1 Corinthians 12: 12-27.

The body is a single unit yet it holds together a diversity of many parts (refer verse 12a). Likewise, as followers of the one Lord Jesus we are all baptised by the one Spirit into the one community of the Church, yet we are all different and diversely gifted.

1. Discuss what makes the dynamic between being one body and many parts simple to live out. Consider also what makes this dynamic difficult?

2. The community in Corinth struggled with division. In this sense, the body was unhealthy. Paul describes two types of divisive exclusion:

a. In verses 14-20, Paul describes a type of **self-exclusion**, arising from members of the community putting themselves down and concluding that they do not matter. Explore the arguments Paul offers to counter this problem.

b. In verses 21-26, Paul describes a different type of **imposed-exclusion** that arises where one part of the body regards another as weaker, unimportant or dishonourable. In these verses, what does Paul suggest is needed to ensure there is no division in the body?

3. Pause for a moment to consider the experience of being excluded from a group where you long to belong. This can happen to us by the deliberate actions of one member or a group of members, and it can happen unknowingly. Each of us can, knowingly or not, be among those who exclude 'the other'.

If you can do so safely and feel willing to do so, discuss these thoughts with your group.

4. In a time of personal reflection, consider when you have noted divisive behaviours in the Church. If you feel safe and in a context of respectful conversation, share together any reflections people are willing to bring to a group conversation.

5. Where do you see Paul's healthier way of 'one body, many parts' lived out in your group or community? How might this be encouraged in your community?





## Connecting these ideas with our *Strategic Priorities*

In the spirit of the passage from 1 Corinthians (referred to on page 12), the three *Strategic Priorities* reflect important signs of life across the Church. The *Priorities* invite a focus that nurtures a spirit of proactive inclusion across the Church. The areas of *Strategic Priority* are vital and unique parts of the body that God is ‘arranging’ (verse 18) and ‘combining’ (verse 24) in our day.

From this perspective, the three adopted *Strategic Priorities* respond to a risk of exclusion, either:

- i. a form of self-exclusion, whereby people feel that they don’t belong, are unimportant or are not welcome; or
  - ii. a form of imposed-exclusion, whereby existing ways of being church are experienced as rigid or alienating, which makes it difficult for people to find their life-giving place.
6. How might the image of the body referred to by Paul speak to the Synod’s adopted *Strategic Priorities*? In what ways might people representative of the *Priority* areas perceive themselves to be unimportant? How might we actively encourage people from diverse cultures, from younger generations, and those seeking diverse expressions of gathered community?

These ideas of exclusion and inclusion challenge us; they require concerted efforts and a readiness to be open to change. They call upon us to build relationships based upon respectful listening. The blessings that can flow from fuller participation from all parts of the body of Christ will help the whole body to grow.

Verse 27 reminds us: “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it”.

Just as Christ gave his body for the sake of the world, so the Church is called to give itself for the sake of the world. In this way we follow Christ as co-workers in the mission of God. We seek to strengthen the Church as the body of Christ, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the world which God so loves and for which Christ died.

7. Can you name ways in which your gathered community gives itself as the Body of Christ for the sake of the world? How might the Holy Spirit be leading and challenging your community to new ways of expressing this Gospel call?



# An invitation to engage with the *Strategic Priorities*

This booklet briefly explored the purpose and description of the three *Strategic Priorities*. Reflections and activities are offered throughout the booklet to provoke exploration and reflection and to assist individuals and gathered communities to engage with these *Priorities*.

Your gathered community is now invited to give intentional focus to the *Priorities* as you discern Christ's call to participate in God's mission.

In your pilgrimage, and that of your gathered community, begin by asking questions like:

- How do the *Strategic Priorities* speak to our decision-making processes?
- How do we engage with and listen to the voices of people from the priority areas?
- What might we need to change in our structures, our leadership and our expressions of worship, witness and service as a consequence?

As you continue to ask these questions, we invite you to use all the resources available that describe related components of the Synod's Strategic Framework. These can be downloaded from the Synod's website at [ucavictas.org.au/visionandmission/](http://ucavictas.org.au/visionandmission/).

As well as this booklet, other booklets in the series include:

- *Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles* (March 2017);
- *Supporting information on the Statements of Intent* (July 2017); and
- *Areas of Focus: informing a whole of Church conversation* (November 2017).

The booklets are offered as conversation partners in the Church's ongoing spiritual discernment that seeks an intentional and coordinated focus on the mission of God.

Together we pray that we will be open to discerning the call of God's Spirit. It is a journey anchored in prayer. It is a journey that involves listening, planning, visioning and stepping out upon the path of faithful pilgrimage.

By God's grace, God's Holy Spirit has woven the Church together. We pray that same Spirit will continue to weave the Church faithfully into the tapestry of God's loving purposes for the world.

If you would like to share how you have created initiatives in your community that focus on the *Strategic Priorities*, please send your stories or photos to

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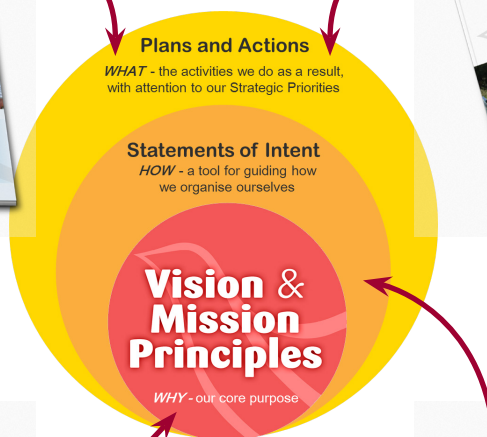
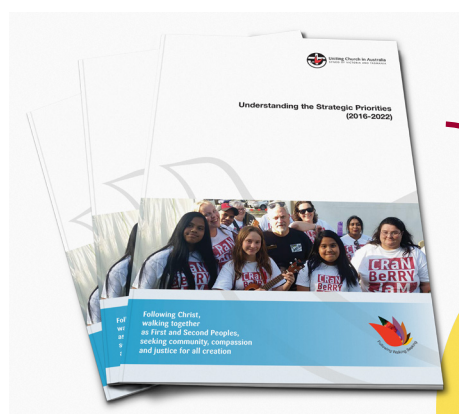
**Further information can be found via:** [ucavictas.org.au/visionandmission/](http://ucavictas.org.au/visionandmission/)

### The three Strategic Priorities

1. ministries which foster diverse gathered communities of renewal, Christian practice and mission
2. culturally diverse mission and ministry;
3. mission and ministry with children, youth, their families and young people.

### The Four Areas of Focus

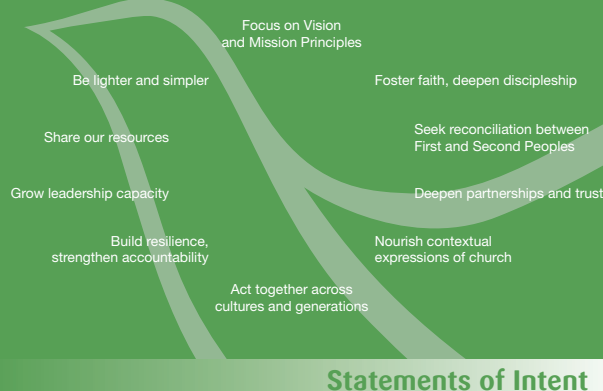
1. The identity of Jesus Christ and Christianity in a post-Christendom world;
2. Multi-cultural and multi-faith Australia and its relationship to its First Peoples;
3. Peace-making, power and powerlessness, being with and for the poor;
4. Inter-faith and intercultural engagement, encounter and learning.



### Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation

God in Christ is at mission in the world and sends the Church in the Spirit to:

1. share the Good News of Jesus Christ
2. nurture followers of Christ in life-giving communities of reconciliation
3. respond in compassion to human need
4. live justly and seek justice for all
5. care for creation
6. listen to each generation and culture so as to live out the Gospel in fresh ways
7. pursue God's mission in partnership







Helping enable an intentional focus on God's mission

