



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Level 2, Wesley Place
130 Lonsdale St,
Melbourne Vic 3000
Telephone: (03) 9116 1400
www.victas.uca.org.au

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To: Church Councils and Ministry/Institution Leadership
Subject: Autism and Congregational Life

Increasingly, congregations and faith communities are talking about, and looking for ways to support the participation of children and adults with autism. As individuals and families with members on the spectrum seek a faith community of acceptance, belonging, learning, ritual, and growth, they also bring their gifts and contributions which need to be recognized and encouraged, for the building up of the Body of Christ.

The 2019-2022 Synod Disability Action Plan recognised that there are many individuals and families in our congregations who live with autism.

A need was expressed for some resources and personal perspectives which would stimulate conversations about how to better support individuals and families wishing to be involved in congregational life.

It is hoped this 3-part captioned video series (personal, parental and theological), with accompanying resources/small group questions will assist in this.

Each video could stand on its own as part of the trilogy, although it is recommended the three be viewed together to gain an overall perspective. The accompanying questions are designed to stimulate conversations: be it within small groups, as prompts for sermons, or for Church Council.

Focussed on theological perspectives, Video 3 has a link to Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe's 2021 Synod Bible Studies 'Discerning the Path Home: an exploration of the Intersections of Identity, Disability, Social Exclusion and Healing'. Kylie's particular study of the Great Banquet (Luke 14: 7-24) would be an excellent means to further explore your response to people living with autism.

I wish you well as you consider how best to engage with this material, and give consideration to ways you are called to respond.

Yours in ministry,

Rev David Fotheringham
Moderator
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania