

'Life in All its Fullness'

A Mission Statement of the Banyule Network of Uniting Churches

We proclaim a **creator God**, the **good news of Jesus** and the presence of the **Holy Spirit** in the world. We will support people in their **faith journey** and find **fresh ways to explore faith** for **people at the edges**. Our commitment is to provide **hospitality, care and compassion** for those in need; to act on **injustice** and **poverty**, and to care for the **environment**.

Who we are: We are a Christian 'community of faith', made up of congregations and communities of the Uniting Church located in the Banyule region in the north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Victoria. From formerly independent congregations, we have chosen to work together as a Network to serve God in our local neighbourhood, region, and in the wider world.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, meet and serve, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

As members of the Uniting Church, we confidently believe that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God brings us into right relationship with God, whereby in faith we can:

- live in a close, loving, personal, dynamic relationship with the living God
- participate in the worshipping, caring and serving community of Christians
- receive God's gifts so that life can be what God means it to be – loving, purposeful, joyful, eternal; and
- tell others of this good news and live it out in acts of compassion, service and justice in the community.

Our mission: We have five priority areas for our life and mission as a Network.

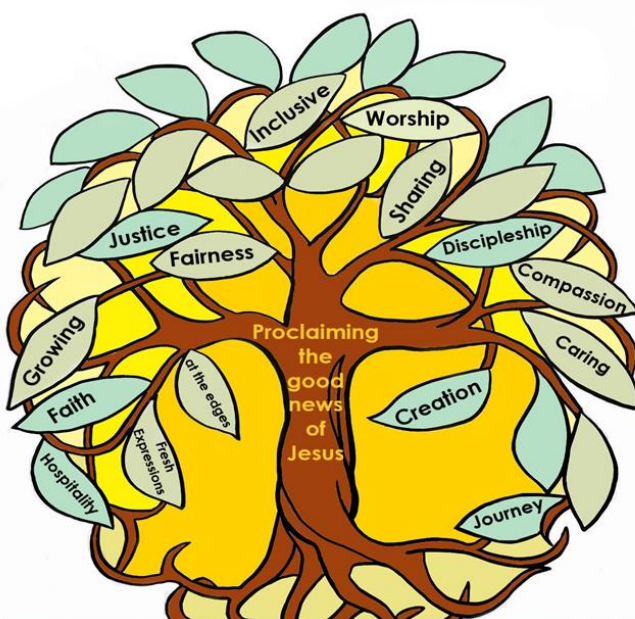
1. Worship – to nurture and inspire our faith, engage all age groups, and provide fresh ways to explore faith for people at the edges. Worship is central to our identity, to how we relate to God and to each other.

2. Discipleship and faith formation. We recognise that discipleship and deepening of faith involve life-long learning and practice. We seek deeper understanding of our faith in the context of our culture and vocation.

3. Community engagement and support. We are committed to making a positive, constructive contribution to the well-being of the communities in which we live, especially through practising hospitality and care.

4. Justice and advocacy. We strive for a world in which all people can live well and achieve their potential. We will advocate and act from a Christian perspective for those who struggle to be heard in the community.

5. Wider world (beyond the Network). As citizens in a wealthy, peaceful country, we recognise our responsibility to 'love our neighbours' and care for the environment on a national and global scale.



Our mission is embedded in the love of God, Father Son and Spirit who brings us into being and calls us to care for each other and creation.

Our Action:

1. Worship. We will:

- ensure opportunities for worship in a variety of forms to nurture, inspire and deepen our faith, both for current members and those in our community seeking to connect with God;
- support 'fresh expressions' of worship (including Messy Church, intergenerational worship) that offer new opportunities, especially for families, and those on the edge of the traditional church;
- be creative and open to innovation (e.g. online worship, Café church, different types of music);
- give a high priority to pastoral care of all in our worshipping communities, especially those on the edge.

2. Discipleship and faith formation. We will:

- encourage small groups for the deepening of relationships, discussion and sharing of faith, and pastoral care. We will give particular attention to Lenten and Advent studies.
- create and support other opportunities for learning, such as workshops for equipping members for pastoral care, a local theological hub, and the Café of Dangerous Ideas;
- support a local hub providing Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), within and beyond the Network;
- encourage and support members in linking their life, work and other interests with their faith.

3. Community engagement and support. We will:

- focus on 'hospitality' and building caring relationships in the way we interact with our community;
- operate the Sycamore Tree café as a visible, active connection with the local community through provision of hospitality, training, and as a venue for conversation and discussion;
- sustain *hope springs* as a welcoming and caring Christian community for people living with mental illness, isolation and loneliness;
- provide opportunities for care-based community groups to use our facilities;
- affirm and support our congregations and members who are engaged in many individual forms of caring and community service.

4. Justice and advocacy. We will:

- ensure a 'safe' environment for all who use our programs and services, especially children and at-risk groups;
- provide practical support for refugees and asylum seekers through visitation, practical help and future provision of a house in the local community (in partnership with Uniting);
- partner with Uniting in other programs (e.g. Linlithgow Senior Citizens Activity Centre);
- support local actions and programs (e.g. English language conversation);
- advocate for community and governments to act with justice, care for people, and sustainable use of the environment; and seek to be personally informed on these issues.

5. Wider world. We will:

- financially support Uniting Church programs at state, national and international levels (e.g., Christmas Bowl, Lenten Appeal, Frontier Services);
- seek opportunities to actively and financially support people and projects where there is connection with Network members;
- take an active interest in the wider world, be informed about issues, invite speakers, and regularly pray for the wider world in our worship service;
- affirm our members who choose to support (including financially) people, projects and care agencies throughout the world.

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