

WHERE ARE WE AT WITH UPDATING THE CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE?

4 MAY 2014
SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

INTRODUCTION

- The actual Profile document is a rather long one, 16 A4 pages, together with several pages of Appendices.
- This update will refer to data sections only briefly. The main parts being covered today are:
 - MISSION DIRECTIONS
 - MINISTRY NEEDS
 - PLACEMENT TO BE FILLED

How you can help us

- We will get the best outcome if you think of an area that hasn't been covered, provide a brief written statement of how you would include reference to it, and it will be taken back to the CLT for its opinion.
- Please do not use up time today by “word-smithing”.
- Let's go now to the Profile Sections as they are sequenced.

Section 1 Key Congregational Features

- Largely data input from the last two years on attendances, changes, events such as baptisms, confirmations, funerals, transfers
- We provide a list of our church groups and best estimates of numbers in each.
- They ask : Is the congregation – stable, growing, declining, changing in composition, culturally mixed? We say it is stable.
- Do we need to add “culturally mixed” ?

What mission activities do we do best?

- This has been answered in terms of the 2011 NCLS data findings.
- We do best in our SERVICE, VISION AND INNOVATION.
- What would we like to do better ? FAITH SHARING, FAITH (Is it alive and growing?), BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Section 2

DIRECTION AND GOALS

- MISSION DIRECTIONS OF THE PAST 3 – 5 YEARS HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF THE TOGETHER ON THE WAY, ENRICHING COMMUNITY MODEL.
- THIS SECTION REMAINS INCOMPLETE UNTIL WE HAVE THE REPORTS OF THE THREE PRIORITY TASK GROUPS.
- CLT WILL HAVE THREE SCOPING DOCUMENTS FROM THESE TASK GROUPS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD BY 15 MAY.

Section 2 (continued)

- In about 3 to 4 months time, we hope to have statements giving our best approximations on how each priority will be implemented during the next 3 to 5 years. Our new Minister will work with us to take these forward.
- The Handout you have received on Mission Directions Input to Profile has been included fully in the Profile. There's too much to include on Powerpoint. Take a little time now to read it.

CLT Views on Valued Aspects of Church Life

- Very high : Sermons, preaching or Bible teaching; practical care for one another in times of need; ministry with children and youth; community care
- High : Sharing in Holy Communion; traditional style of worship or music; contemporary style of worship or music; openness to social diversity
- Average : Prayer ministry for one another; Bible study, prayer groups or discussion groups; social activities or meeting new people; reaching those who do not attend church

Section 3 Description of the Congregation

- CLT is asked to provide descriptions of the Congregation's self-understanding.
- MISSION is understood in a broad context of people leading and helping with the Congregation's activities, promoting and participating in community outreach programs, and supporting areas of demonstrated need in the wider Church e.g. Samaritan's Purse
- Our theological values are those in our Seven Core Values statement.

Section 3 (Continued)

- We worship, bear witness to, and serve a risen Lord. All our activities, including our community activities, demonstrate these three actions through strategies we have outlined in the Handout.
- The role of Ministry (exercised through the Ministry Team) is to guide and enable. We need both up-front leadership as well as the ability to facilitate and encourage leaders and participants in all our activities. The Minister needs to be sensitive in knowing when to take the leadership role. The Minister needs to enlarge our vision and call people to the vision of God.

Section 3 (continued)

- During times of change, the CLT ensures that we will not lose sight of our seven core values, and will continue consultatively to listen to the Spirit as expressed through the Congregation and its councils, in guiding a way in which we move forward in faith.
- We affirm the centrality of the place of the Bible, and interpret the Bible in the light of its historical context and the Church's teaching.

Section 3 (continued)

- Our Ministry Team is not involved in “nuts and bolts” administration and financial management, but ensures that those who are, act helpfully and as set out in the Regulations, handbooks and directives which pertain to all councils of the Church. Important decisions of the CLT are made consultatively with the Ministry Area Coordinators, the Congregational Meeting and the advice, from time to time, of the Presbytery Minister.

Section 3 (continued)

- We affirm that the Ministry Area support groups are open to all our worshippers if they have an interest in the work of particular Church activities within the mandates of the Ministry Areas (as outlined in our Governance Document). These groups help in the formulation of policies as well as promote involvement and communication.

Section 4 Key Features of our Community and District

- This is largely a data presentation section giving statistical and geographic information, using ABS categories.

Section 5 Our Ministerial Team

- Finally, we are asked to provide considerable data on our Ministerial Team, facilities for them, and a statement on how we want to see the Placement filled.
- We have indicated no change in the nature of the Ministry Team, namely, one Minister of the Word on a full-time basis, and a Youth Pastor (at present on a 0.8 level appointment) who will focus on ministry with young adults, youth and children.

Section 6

- This Section asks us to describe the Joint Congregation model that operates between the Oxley – Darra Congregations and the Darra Vietnamese Congregation.
- It is envisaged that when the Darra Vietnamese Congregation gains a stable ministry appointment, our CLT and their Committee of Management will bring proposals to the Congregational Meeting on transfer of beneficial ownership of the Darra property to them. This will enable them to act with full independence as a Congregation in the UCA.

What do our worship services at Oxley look like?

- The Congregation of the Oxley –Darra Uniting Church meets at three times on each Sunday except for variations during school holidays.
- The 7.45 am Service : This service has an order of worship that is traditional, with three hymns from the hymnbook (Together in Song), uses the People's Book of Uniting in Worship, includes sung responses, and has weekly Communion. Numbers have increased over the past two years, and average between 35 and 40.

7.45am Service (cont.)

- Worshippers are mainly in the 55+ age group and participate in a range of congregational activities such as the Garden Lovers' Club, the Social and Craft Group, and the Day Fellowship. They enjoy a couple of bus tours together each year, and support the Church financially in a strong way.

The 9.45 am Service

- This service includes a wide range of ages, including young families with children, people whose children have moved away from home, some older people, as well as a growing multicultural group which includes Tongans, Samoans, and Sudanese. People with disabilities also attend. During the service, children leave to engage in Sunday School and The Disciple Ship learning activities. Active involvement of worshippers in the order of worship is strongly encouraged in what is usually described as a contemporary worship service.

The 9.45 am service (cont.)

- People attending this service are usually committed to financial giving and service to the community as well as leading many of the congregational activities. Attendances usually range between 60 and 70 adults and children.

The 6.30 pm Service

- This service is normally planned for youth and young adults, but those who prefer worship in the evening rather than the day also participate. The young adults often participate in worship leading. An average of 25 worshippers attend and enjoy singing contemporary spiritual songs accompanied by modern instrumental music. The singers and the instrumental team lead a dynamic service, which on one Sunday each month, is presented in a café style setting. Film clips and other audio-visual segments are used to stimulate thoughtful responses in this kind of worship setting.