



**uniting
church**
Orange

Mission Plan 2019

*To demonstrate faith in action and God's love by engaging
with the Word and embracing diversity across our community*

February 2019

Vision statement

To be a living example of God's love in our community.

Mission statement

To demonstrate faith in action and God's love by engaging with the Word and embracing diversity across our community.

Our Values

Welcoming

Prayerful

Faithful

Loving

Compassionate

Inclusive

Forgiving

Respectful

The things we value about God:

God's Love

God's Word

1. Background and Purpose

In the Basis of Union, it is highlighted that the church belongs to Christ, and that he will continually renew it:

'The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church is able to live and endure through the changes of history only because its Lord comes, addresses, and deals with people in and through the news of his completed work. Christ who is present when he is preached among people is the Word of God who acquits the guilty, who gives life to the dead and who brings into being what otherwise could not exist. Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people's attention and awaken faith; he calls people into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews them as his Church.'

Basis of Union, paragraph 4

It is in our DNA that we will be open to change and Christ's leading. This does not commit us to an easy journey, although it does commit us to a journey where we seek renewal in the hope of the risen Christ.

In 1977 the churches of Orange that came together to form the Uniting Church were strong in human and financial resources, and there seemed to be no obvious reason to rationalise premises and combine worship services. In the intervening 41 years we, along with many other churches, have seen a gradual decline in membership and financial resources, and with this has come the understanding that we must rethink our mission and ministry in order to *'live and endure through the changes of history'*. Our task is not simply to survive, but find freedom beyond mere survival, and allow Christ to do his work as he *'rules and renews [us] as his Church'*.

It has been stated on more than one occasion that the last reason that we should make major changes within the Uniting Church congregations of Orange should be to save money. In fact, we should always be looking at how we can better live out the mission of Jesus in this city and surrounds and model the sacrificial attitude of Jesus as we seek to do this. The reality is, of course, that money does talk and that given our changed circumstances we no longer have the resources to maintain our current structure. With this motivation we have set out to completely reassess the use of our resources in the life and witness of the Uniting Church in Orange, and we are trying to keep uppermost in our minds that saving as much money as possible is not our chief end. We are aiming to reallocate resources, but not to such a degree that our life and witness is completely hamstrung. We are walking a fine line, but we do not go through this time of discernment relying only on human resources, but *'in the power of the Holy Spirit, [as] Christ reaches out to command people's attention and awaken faith.'*

Vision, Mission and Values

The process of change and discernment has been intense over this last year, and ironically, for some it has been too fast and for others it has been too slow.

The key aspect of the year has been the task of discerning together what our vision and mission is for the Uniting Church in Orange. We had done some work in previous years as we considered what it is to be a missional church, and last year we undertook various one-on-one conversations with people as the Guiding Team did its work of appreciative inquiry. At the end of 2017 we undertook the National Church Life Survey, and this gave us many more insights into the life and health of the congregations of the Uniting Church in Orange.

In February this year we added to this by sharing together in three vision and mission sessions. This was a very encouraging time as the congregations came together to share hopes, dreams and concerns for the future. A number of people shared, with surprise, that many of these hopes, dreams and concerns were common to all.

These evenings helped us to think about what is most important to us and helped us to develop the vision statement, mission statement and set of values that appeared earlier in this document.

Following these evenings, a survey was undertaken with the children to listen to their views and concerns about life and church.

The information gathered in these various areas has been used to set up three action teams to focus on the current and future life and witness of Orange Uniting Church in the areas of Worship, Pastoral Care and Community Engagement. These action teams have since met together in a day long workshop and are now continuing the work of discernment

Worship

The last year has seen some experiments in combined worship for the four city congregations. Wesley and The 10am Project have been worshipping together twice a month since July 2016, and it was decided to extend this to include Fiveways and St John's from July 2018. This was seen as a time of transition and a way to help the four city congregations step into a new style of worship twice month while still maintaining their familiar worship on the other Sundays. This has been a time of great joy for some people and a time of real challenge for others. It is hoped that the congregation will use this time of transition and learning to better shape the worship of one city congregation in the coming year.

Governance

Since the formation of the Uniting Church, the congregations in and around Orange have remained separate congregations with their own church councils and have cooperated in

various forms through this time. The most recent form of this co-operation has been what is known as 'Orange Uniting Church Parish'. With Presbytery approval, each of the congregations has delegated the responsibility for calling and the oversight of ministers of the word and for matters of finance, property and communication, to the Orange Parish Co-ordinating Team. The Team comprises five members elected from across the parish, an appointed member from each of the seven congregations and the Minister of the Word in placement in the parish.

In order to visibly show the new stage that the congregations are entering into, to aid the shared ownership of decisions and to align with the governance structures of the Uniting Church, it was decided that proposals would be taken to the congregations to dissolve the 'Orange Uniting Church Parish' co-operating structure and to close the individual congregations and form a new 'Orange Uniting Church Congregation' which would have one church council with oversight of the eight worship centres. The proposals would also include a proposal to transfer the 'beneficial rights' of the properties from each individual congregation to the new Orange Uniting Church Congregation. The three proposals were presented to the seven congregations at their congregational meetings during July, August and September and were passed unanimously by all congregations. These changes will come into effect on the 30th of November 2018.

Services of celebration and closure are planned for each of the seven congregations during October and November and a special service to launch the Orange Uniting Church Congregation is planned for Sunday the 2nd of December with the NSW/ACT Moderator, the Rev Simon Hansford. as the guest preacher.

Buildings

A significant amount of time and energy has been spent considering the buildings and properties that we own in the city. We often hear it said, that the church is the people and not the buildings, and this is true, but it is also true that the buildings that the church worships in are special places to the church members and the wider community. Talk of change, closure, sale and lease is very painful for many people. However, we have made a commitment to put everything on the table before God and discern the best use for our properties in relation to the goals of our mission plan, with an aim to combine all of our worship and mission activities on one site.

In order to assess the buildings we have had a visit, and received a report from Synod Property Services; we have undertaken to assess the maintenance costs of our properties for the coming ten years; we have sought and had conversations with Uniting, Kinross Wolaroi School, Orange City Council, Orange Regional Conservatorium and other organisations about possible new uses for our buildings; we have spoken to real estate agents regarding leasing or selling our buildings; we have engaged in community forums regarding the needs of a modern regional city; and we continue to gather as much

information as possible. We have been well supported in this task by the Synod Mission and Property Project staff and other synod, Uniting Resources and presbytery representatives.

It is our hope that we can gather enough information and, combined with this mission plan, we can develop a property proposal that makes sense to our minds. The harder part will be how our hearts respond to what seems sensible, and we will seek God's and each other's comfort and support as we go through what may be a time of grief.

Conclusion

Accompanying this has been the departure of some dear friends and members of the congregations as they have chosen to leave the Uniting Church on account of the decisions that we made at the National Assembly about same gender marriage. We are sad about this but are thankful that we have not fallen out over this issue. We acknowledge the good grace with which these people left, and their desire that we maintain a relationship with each other as old friends and as brothers and sisters in Christ.

All of these areas of focus have made for a difficult and tiring year, but we look forward to new things that are coming. In the year ahead, we expect to see some new ideas and activities being formed, and continued support for many of the long-standing activities of the congregations.

We are seeking to be a church that gets alongside the God of Mission, as we serve our community. We are seeking to be a healthy church that is able to support the mission of the Uniting Church in Australia through our involvement in, the work of the Macquarie Darling Presbytery, and the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT.

We are people of the resurrection, and we look to the hope of resurrection in all the deaths that we face. The resurrection was surprising for the first Christians, but they ultimately embraced the new thing that was occurring, and wonderful life and hope was shared in the good news of Jesus.

*¹⁷ In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young will see visions.
Your elders will dream dreams.*

*¹⁸ Even upon my servants, men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.*

*¹⁹ I will cause wonders to occur in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below.*

Acts 2: 17-19

2. Mission development- Worship, Pastoral Care & Community Connection Key goals and strategies

In recent years, the members and leaders of Orange Uniting Church have spent much time in reflection. It was clear that we needed to undertake a journey, and it was also clear, that in order to undertake that journey it was necessary to know where we were starting from and where we would like to go.

Various books and studies were read by the leadership and interested congregation members including:

- The Missional Church by Alan Roxburgh (book and study)
- Autopsy of a Deceased Church by Thom Rainer (book)
- Claiming Resurrection in the Dying Church: Freedom Beyond Survival by Anna B. Olson (book)
- Ending with Hope: A Resource for Closing Congregations, edited by Beth Ann Gaede (book of essays)

Other activities of the Presbytery, national Church bodies and local initiatives also added to this:

- Mission Assets Project (Macquarie Darling Presbytery, 2016)
- The Guiding Team – Appreciative Inquiry (Orange Parish, 2016/17)
- RMU Field Days – Growing Healthy Churches (RMU 2017)
- The National Church Life Survey (2017)
- Mission and Vision sessions (Uniting Church & Community Engagement, 2018)
- Children’s Focus Groups (Orange Parish, 2018)
- Worship, Pastoral Care and Community Engagement Action Teams (Orange Parish, 2018-)

The ideas for the future direction of Orange Uniting Church that came out of these groups are contained on the following pages under three main focus areas:

1. Worship: Living as God’s People
2. Pastoral Care: Living in the Church
3. Community Connection: Living in God’s World

Evaluate

This mission plan is an integral part of determining the work of Orange Uniting Church in the coming two to three years. It is important that it does not 'remain on a shelf' or become redundant as other things change in the coming months.

We will evaluate the work of the mission plan and reflect on its progress to keep the plan uppermost in our minds and to make sure that our work remains focussed.

The first full evaluation will take place in September 2019 and will involve members of the action teams and the church council as well as feedback from the congregation members.

Following this the plan will be amended, extended or built on as necessary, taking into account the current position and resources that will be needed in the coming years.

Worship

Living as God's People

Goal (What)	Strategy (How)	Timing (When)	Resources (Who/Where)
<p>1. Develop new blended morning worship service as the main service in Orange for the new congregation. The service will encourage involvement of all ages and will include breakout activities/Sunday School for children and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Worship action team meet to follow up on work begun at mission planning day. ii. Share the objectives of the new congregation and the nature of a blended service. Introduce 'Worshipping Together Covenant'. iii. Seek commitment from members to take part in leading worship. iv. Provide training for the leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ongoing ➤ February 2019 ➤ March 2019 ➤ From March 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Worship action Team ➤ Minister ➤ Church Council ➤ Preachers ➤ Congregation members ➤ Musicians ➤ Adaptable and welcoming worship space ➤ Facilities/rooms for breakout spaces. ➤ Refurbishment of church – seating, lighting, audio visual, heating/cooling etc.
<p>2. Develop new streams of worship and fellowship options on Sunday evenings, to meet the needs of a variety of age and styles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Messy Church</i> for families and children seeking informal worship; ➤ <i>Living the Questions</i> for young adults and others seeking open-minded discussion and fellowship; ➤ <i>Youth</i> for high school aged young people; ➤ <i>Taizé</i> for people seeking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Seek the commitment of people to take a leading role in planning and running the gatherings. The minister will also take a leading role in planning, resourcing and facilitating the running of the gatherings. ii. Provide training for the leaders. iii. Provide resources for the leaders. iv. Plan and advertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Current – <i>Messy Church</i> once a month. ➤ Begun in October 2018 – <i>Living the Questions</i> twice a month. ➤ February 2019 – <i>Youth</i> ➤ mid 2019 – <i>Taizé</i> once a month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minister ➤ Church Council ➤ Leaders ➤ Volunteers ➤ Musicians ➤ Halls (big and small), adaptable and welcoming worship space. ➤ Refurbishment of church – seating, lighting, audio visual, heating/cooling etc.

<p>contemplative worship;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Old Time Praise</i> for people seeking a chance to sing their old favourite hymns and songs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ June 2019 – <i>Old Time Praise</i> on a fifth Sunday. 	
<p>3. Continue and develop the relationship with Kinross Wolaroi School</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue to host regular services for the boarders and staff of Kinross Wolaroi School. ii. Have occasional joint worship between the school and congregation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ongoing ➤ 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Church Council ➤ Relationship between school chaplain, principal and minister in placement. ➤ Worship Space.
<p>4. Develop and increase opportunities for prayer and study for spiritual growth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue Living the Questions. ii. Support and equip existing study groups. iii. Use Lent Event study to encourage more involvement in small groups. iv. Begin prayer group or network. v. Develop or join retreat or family camp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ongoing ➤ April 2019 ➤ Lent 2019 ➤ July 2019 ➤ 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Church Council ➤ Worship Action Team ➤ Minister ➤ Congregation members ➤ Study/ prayer Resources ➤ Connection to wider UCA events

Pastoral Care

Living in the Church

Goal (What)	Strategy (How)	Timing (When)	Resources (Who)
<p>1. Develop new pastoral care network for all members of Orange Uniting Church based on Pastoral partners process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pastoral care action team gather list of all OUC members to be included. ii. Organise meeting with Elders, current pastoral partners and others interested to discuss new set up. iii. Provide training for all willing participants to gain best wisdom and practice. iv. Inform congregation members about the pastoral care network and invite people to attend. v. Organise special lunch to launch the new network and people share lunch in their groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ March 2019 ➤ March 2019 ➤ mid 2019 ➤ mid 2019 ➤ mid 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pastoral Care Action Team ➤ Church Council ➤ Elders and pastoral partners ➤ Training provider (UME) ➤ Hospitality team ➤ Welcoming and adaptable hall and/or outdoor spaces
<p>2. Develop a family support connection with baptism and messy church families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide in depth and relationship building baptism preparation. ii. Create list of baptism families from the past 10 years. iii. Advertise and resource Messy Church. iv. Maintain and develop worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Begun in July 2018 ➤ Current ➤ Ongoing ➤ February 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Baptism resources ➤ Baptism elders ➤ Church Council ➤ Messy Church resources ➤ Sunday school resources ➤ Volunteers for Messy Church, and Sunday School ➤ Training

	<p>and facilities that are family focused and adaptable.</p> <p>v. Consult children regarding their needs and desires.</p> <p>vi. Organise baptism anniversary service and special morning tea. Invite families.</p>	<p>➤ Review April 2019</p> <p>➤ June 2019</p>	<p>➤ Worship services that are accessible to children and families</p> <p>➤ Worship space and halls that are welcoming and adaptable</p> <p>➤ Refurbishment of church – seating, lighting, audio visual, heating/cooling etc.</p>
3. Develop more social activities to provide fun, inclusion and relationship building	<p>i. Begin a monthly BBQ after the blended morning service.</p> <p>ii. Plan three big social events for all ages each year, both on and off the church site.</p>	<p>➤ Begun in October 2018</p> <p>➤ June 2019</p>	<p>➤ Pastoral Care Action Team</p> <p>➤ Church Council</p> <p>➤ BBQ</p> <p>➤ Food</p> <p>➤ Volunteers</p> <p>➤ Hall, garden or offsite location</p>
4. Provide monthly communion ‘beyond the gathered congregation’ to members who are unable to attend church	<p>i. Make and update list of those who require this.</p> <p>ii. Provide training to enable people to take communion ‘beyond the gathered congregation’.</p>	<p>➤ March 2019</p> <p>➤ May 2019</p>	<p>➤ Pastoral Care Action Team</p> <p>➤ Minister</p> <p>➤ Church Council</p> <p>➤ Congregation</p>

Community Connection

Living in God's World

Goal (What)	Strategy (How)	Timing (When)	Resources (Who)
<p>1. Build closer relationships with the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Take time to learn the real needs of the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Meet with community leaders (both paid and volunteers). b. Listen to church members who are involved in community activities. c. Engage in activities that are already community events. ii. Encourage church members to support non-church events that are currently seeking to build up the community. iii. Using our facilities, and new-found knowledge, offer to host, or run, appropriate events, (e.g. coffee events in the Hall with speakers on topics of interest; community activities in need of venues etc.). iv. Develop the <i>Markets on the Lawn</i>, not just as a fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Begun in October 2018 ➤ March 2019 ➤ April 2019 ➤ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community Action Team ➤ Church Council ➤ Contacts within community organisations and city council. ➤ Volunteers. ➤ Halls and outside areas that are welcoming and adaptable. ➤ Redevelop outside areas ➤ Redevelop designated buildings for community use and connection

	activity, but as a way to build a presence in the community.		
2. Create safe spaces for the community	<p>i. Using our relationships with the community, seek to understand what 'safe spaces' are needed for groups within the community and can be created with the resources of the Uniting Church in Orange (e.g. buildings and volunteers). Examples might include:</p> <p>a. Open church time on regular days, for quiet, music, prayer relaxation.</p> <p>b. Develop a hall/space that is accessible and available as a 'safe space'.</p> <p>c. Make more use of the outdoor open spaces that surround the church buildings.</p> <p>ii. Continue to support and resource the weekly <i>Mustard Tree Café</i> as a place of safe community and good value healthy food.</p>	<p>➤ April 2019</p> <p>➤ Ongoing</p>	<p>➤ Community Action Team</p> <p>➤ Church Council</p> <p>➤ Contacts within community organisations and city council.</p> <p>➤ Volunteers.</p> <p>➤ Halls and outside areas that are welcoming and adaptable.</p> <p>➤ Redevelop outside areas</p> <p>➤ Redevelop designated buildings for community use and connection</p>
3. Connect with local families through	<p>i. Continue the school holiday</p>	<p>➤ January 2019</p>	<p>➤ Church Council</p> <p>➤ Volunteers.</p>

<p>activities for school aged children</p>	<p>activities at Spring Hill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Partner with Fusion and develop further activities to iii. Develop school holiday activities in the city. iv. Develop term time activity days or sessions. v. support parents and children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ April 2019 ➤ July 2019 ➤ August 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Halls and outside areas that are welcoming and adaptable. ➤ Redevelop outside areas ➤ Redevelop designated buildings for community use and connection
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How will these things fulfil the 5 marks of Mission?

Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, Treasure

Marks of Mission	Signs of life-existing and new possibilities
TELL- proclaim the good news of the reign and rule of God	Worship- Development of blended morning service to bring something for all ages and stages of life. Regular hosting of services with students from Kinross Wolaroi UCA school
TEACH- teach, baptise and nurture new believers	Worship- Messy church, Living the questions study groups and other fellowship options.
TEND- respond to human need by loving service	Worship- New streams of worship/fellowship for Youth and spiritual seekers. Pastoral Care- Review and introduce new pastoral care network for new congregation based on Pastoral partners process. Develop family support connection with baptism and messy church families. Community Connection – Use church facilities to host/run events with speakers on special interest topics, and weekly Mustard tree café in church Hall. Develop school holiday activities for children.
TRANSFORM- seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation	Worship- through prayer in worship services of various types. Pastoral Care- develop social activities to build inclusion and bridges between people from local community and church. Community Connection- Build closer relationships with the local community through meeting community leaders and engaging with groups who seek to transform that community.
TREASURE- strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth	Community Connection- creating safe spaces for the community including quiet spaces and outdoors. Develop the 'Markets on the Lawn'