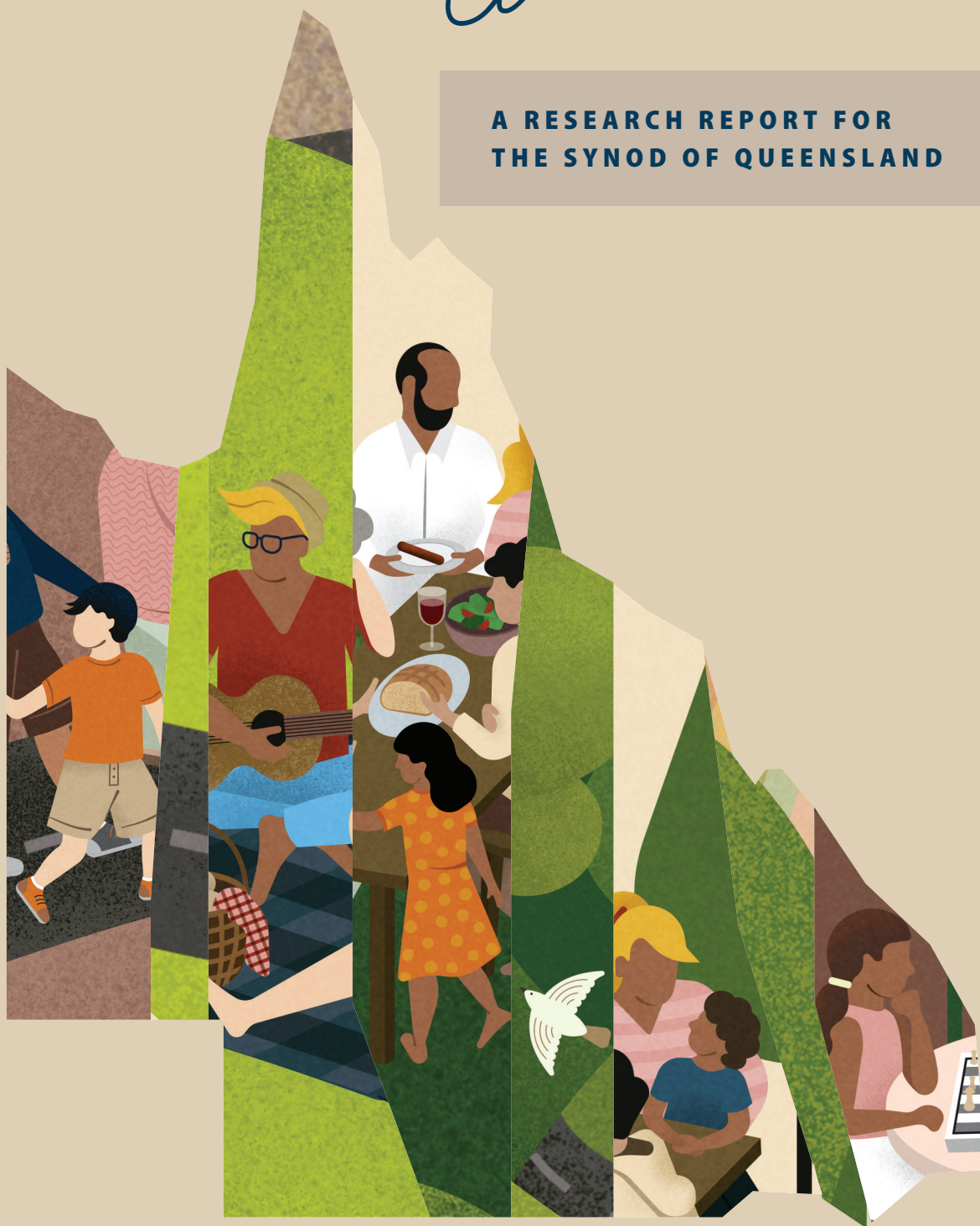


Engaging Younger Generations

A RESEARCH REPORT FOR
THE SYNOD OF QUEENSLAND



The United Methodist Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Presbytery and local church leaders for their open and honest conversations that led to the preparation of this document

The Executive Summary (Section 0) of this document was written with the use of AI tools

Graphic Design & Illustration by Tamar Petersen @ Red Box Studios, www.redboxstudios.com.au

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"Young people are not merely the Church's future. ***They are the Church now***—beloved children of God, members of the Body of Christ, and bearers of gifts through which the Spirit continues to renew and lead us."



Statement of *Support*

I welcome *Engaging Younger Generations* as an important and timely contribution to the Queensland Synod's life.

Young people are not merely the Church's future. They are the Church now—beloved children of God, members of the Body of Christ, and bearers of gifts through which the Spirit continues to renew and lead us.

This report honestly names the fragility and unevenness of our engagement with children, youth and young adults. It also reveals encouraging signs of hope: First Peoples, Pasifika, and culturally diverse communities nurturing faith across generations; congregations building relationships through worship, schools, playgroups, and camps; and young people already serving, discerning, and leading.

Our task is not merely to create ministry for young people, but to listen to them, walk alongside them, and

shape the life of the Church with them. This requires safe, inclusive communities, genuine intergenerational relationships, sustained investment in formation and mentoring, and the courage to entrust young people with meaningful leadership.

This work is not primarily about preserving the institution. It is an expression of our faithfulness to Jesus Christ and our shared calling to participate in God's mission. When children and young people are seen, heard, valued and empowered, the whole Church is strengthened.

The specific responses and resourcing decisions arising from this report belong to the Queensland Synod as it listens together to the Spirit and to young people. I offer my support for the report's central call: that children, youth and young adults be seen, heard, formed and empowered as full participants and leaders in Christ's Church today.

Rev Charissa Suli

PRESIDENT



Introduction and ***Affirmation***

For many years, across Synod meetings, Presbyteries, agencies and congregations, we have recognised the importance of engaging younger generations in the life and mission of the Church. We have celebrated faithful ministry, named areas of concern, and expressed a desire to see children, young people and young adults flourish within our communities of faith.

This report provides one of the clearest pictures we have had for some time of where we now stand.

Its findings are both sobering and encouraging.

Many congregations and ministries are investing faithfully in younger generations, often through the dedication of a relatively small number of leaders and volunteers. At the same time, the report highlights significant challenges: declining participation, limited resourcing, and the fragility of much of this ministry across our Church.

Yet there are also clear signs of hope.

New life is emerging where there is intentional discipleship, strong relationships, leadership

development and genuine intergenerational community. This report reminds us that engaging younger generations is not simply one ministry among many. It is integral to our calling as the Church.

If we are serious about renewal, about participating in God's mission, and about seeing vibrant communities of faith flourish into the future, then we must be prepared to invest intentionally in younger generations today.

The challenge is not simply how we attract more young people. It is whether we are willing to become the kind of Church in which younger generations find belonging, encounter Jesus Christ, grow as disciples, discover their gifts and participate fully in the life and leadership of God's people.

"This report reminds us that engaging younger generations is not simply one ministry among many. ***It is integral to our calling as the Church.***"

This report should not be received as another document to acknowledge and set aside.

It is a call to action:

- A call to ***listen*** more carefully.
- A call to ***invest*** more intentionally.
- A call to ***strengthen*** discipleship, leadership and relationships.
- A call to ***support*** those already doing this work faithfully.
- A call to ***experiment, innovate*** and ***make room*** for new possibilities.

And above all, a call to place younger generations at the heart of our shared vision for renewal.

I commend this report to the Queensland Synod and encourage congregations, Presbyteries, agencies and leaders across our Church to engage seriously with its findings and recommendations.

My prayer is that it will lead not only to conversation, but to commitment; not only to reflection, but to action; and not only to concern, but to hope-filled investment in the generations God is calling and raising up among us.

The future of the Church rests in God's faithfulness. Our responsibility is to respond with courage, generosity and trust as we participate in God's mission together.

May we become a Church in which every generation can encounter Jesus, grow as disciples, discover their gifts and participate fully in God's renewing work.

Bruce Moore

MODERATOR

0

Executive Summary

The *Engaging Younger Generations* report provides a snapshot of how Uniting Church congregations and faith communities across Queensland are currently engaging in ministry with children, youth and young adults. Prepared as part of the Synod's wider commitment to renewal and growth, it is intended to inform the next stage of thinking, planning and support in this area.

The research outlined in the report is based on interviews, follow up conversations, cross-checking with available data, and includes information from 182 congregations and faith communities across the Synod gathered during 2025 and 2026. What emerges is a clearer picture of both the current reality and the work still required if the church is to renew its engagement with younger generations in the local church context.

UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND

The research confirms that engagement with younger generations is still happening in many parts of the church, but it is often limited, uneven, and reliant on a small number of committed people. Around two-thirds of churches reported some engagement with children, just over half with youth, and slightly more than two-fifths with young adults. In many places this engagement is relatively light, often centred around a few connected families, occasional participation in worship, or links through chaplaincy and Religious Instruction in schools. Sunday worship remains the most common place where children are engaged, through children's talks, Sunday School, Kids Church, or other intergenerational practices. Midweek programs such as playgroups, youth groups and young adult gatherings are also present, but in far fewer locations.

WHAT THIS PAPER COVERS

Along with reporting raw data from the research, the report highlights a range of strengths and opportunities already present across the Synod. Churches are engaging younger generations through playgroups, school chaplaincy, RI, relationships with early learning services, camps and peak experiences, intergenerational ministry, worship, and opportunities for children, youth and young adults to serve and lead. In CALD and multicultural communities especially, younger generations are often part of the life of the whole church through the combination of family, culture, worship and service. These strengths sit alongside some persistent challenges, such as ageing congregations, declining numbers of children and youth, limited volunteer capacity, inconsistent data, low confidence in engaging young adults, and a lack of investment in sustained specialist training and formation pathways over many years. The research also suggests that where churches have designated children's, youth or families' staff, ministry is often more intentional and sustained. Where this kind of support is absent, many churches struggle to move beyond goodwill and aspiration.

Of note, the paper explores ministry within congregations and faith communities only. Within the broader Uniting Church context, valuable ministry with younger generations includes the work of schools, colleges, Uniting Early Learning, agencies, and activities at Alexandra Park Conference Centre. The paper does explore some of the intersection of local churches with this broader context.

FINDINGS

Overall, the findings suggest that engaging younger generations cannot be treated as a side issue or left to a few interested people.

Such ministry is closely connected to renewal, discipleship, leadership development, and the future life of the church in Queensland. The report points to the need for a more intentional and coordinated response, including investment in specialist ministry leaders, leadership formation, coaching, accessible training, stronger support for families and households, and clearer pathways for congregations to begin or deepen ministry in ways that fit their context. There are also signs of hope already visible, including collaborative presbytery initiatives, camps and leadership programs, new opportunities emerging through Trinity College, and local churches beginning to shift towards more



intergenerational and missionally responsive practice. Renewal with younger generations is possible, but it will require sustained commitment, practical support, and a willingness across the church to take this work seriously and invest accordingly.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The paper outlines a range of areas for response and action. We commend these areas to the Synod office, to Presbyteries and to congregations and faith communities for consideration and action. The findings identified within the paper will inform the work of the Synod's Mission Accompanying Team, work that will be outlined in a separate strategy and operational plan.

Our thanks to the lay and ordained leaders of local churches right across Queensland for their willingness to share experiences, perspectives, hopes and fears. It is your stories that we have attempted to capture.

Hannah Legge, Jess Pinkerton, Scott Guyatt

MISSION ACCOMPANYING TEAM

1

Introduction

The Queensland Synod at its 37th meeting focussed on the theme of renewal and growth. Subsequently the Synod Office developed its new strategic plan, Our Foundations for Renewal and Growth, based on this same theme. The plan incorporates key foundations of mission renewal and growth, flourishing presbyteries, forming leaders, fit-for-purpose governance, and stewarding resources.

Under the foundation of mission renewal and growth, the plan commits the Synod office to accompany the Church, supporting renewed discipleship, new growth, and missional development. As one aspect of this plan, the Mission Accompanying Team (MAT) was tasked with establishing this current state report, *Engaging Younger Generations*, exploring ministry with younger generations within the Uniting Church in Queensland. This report is the first step, ahead of developing a strategy and operational plan to support the work of renewing and growing ministry with younger generations.

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The Mission Accompanying Team subsequently undertook an intentional research project, interviewing ministry agents or leaders in 182 congregation and faith communities within the Synod, exploring experiences, opportunities and challenges for local churches in engaging younger generations. While acknowledging that there is significant and vital ministry with younger generations across the broader Uniting Church, including schools and colleges, agencies, Uniting Early Learning, and Alexandra Park Conference Centre, the research that led to the development of this document takes as its focus life in local church communities.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Produced as a result of this research, the *Engaging Younger Generations* report outlines:

- What we have found in researching the current state of *Engaging Younger Generations* in the Uniting Church congregations and faith communities in Queensland
- What we have learnt through this research process
- Some initial recommendations and opportunities for consideration

Within this document we use the terms Engaging Young People and Engaging Younger Generations interchangeably. Both may be defined as: *Ministry by the whole of God's community with young people from birth into adulthood - drawing them deeper into God's Kingdom, in family, intergenerational and community spaces, where a life-long growing faith is discipled, in a whole-of-being way.*



ADDITIONALLY, WE USE THESE TERMS:

Younger Generations	Any person aged 0-25 (includes children, youth and young adults)
Child/Children	Aged 0-12 , primary school age and under
Youth	Aged 13-17 , high school age
Young Adult	Aged 18-25 (35 in some cultures), post school aged, legally adults
Intergenerational	Two or more different age groups ...together learning, growing, living in faith through in common experiences, parallel learning, contributive occasions, and interactive sharing ¹
Churches, or Local Churches	Formally recognised congregations or faith communities of the Uniting Church, within the Synod of Queensland

Finally, by way of introduction, we have included a range of real, de-identified quotes within the paper. These give expression to the real views, opinions, experiences or practices of Queensland Uniting Church congregations and faith communities with respect to engaging younger generations.

HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

For questions and feedback in response to the report, please contact the Mission Accompanying Team via hi.mat@ucaqld.com.au

¹ James W. White, *Intergenerational Religious Education: Models, Theories and Prescription for Interage Life and Learning in the Faith Community* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988), p.18



2

Background

While there are exceptions, ministry with younger generations, and the presence of children, youth and young adults in churches has been gradually declining for some years within the Uniting Church in Queensland. The number of paid youth and children's ministry workers in churches and presbyteries has also declined. Additionally, there has not been any substantial training or specialist formation for those working with younger generations at Trinity College Qld in many years.

Over recent years, and in response to the decline experienced, decisions and discussion at the 31st Synod (Open Space, 2014), 32nd Synod (Priority Directions, 2016), 33rd Synod (Synod Inspired, 2017) and 35th Synod (Project Plenty, 2020) explored a range of approaches to increasing focus and investment in ministry with younger generations. Despite regularly raising this issue, arguably none of these discussions and decisions resulted in a sustained outcome of increased focus or investment.

Between the 35th and 37th Synods, work was undertaken through the Plenty Project to increase engagement and discipleship with younger generations. Under Plenty, the Synod Office adopted a vision, principles and definition of ministry with young people. Additionally, a discipleship framework was adopted, and resources collaboratively created, curated and shared in an endeavour to support congregations in engaging young people in worship and raise the profile of ministry with younger generations across the state.

The vision and principles adopted was as follows:

VISION

The Uniting Church in Queensland has a vision to see...

*Children and Young people **actively engaged in mission and ministry in every Queensland community.***

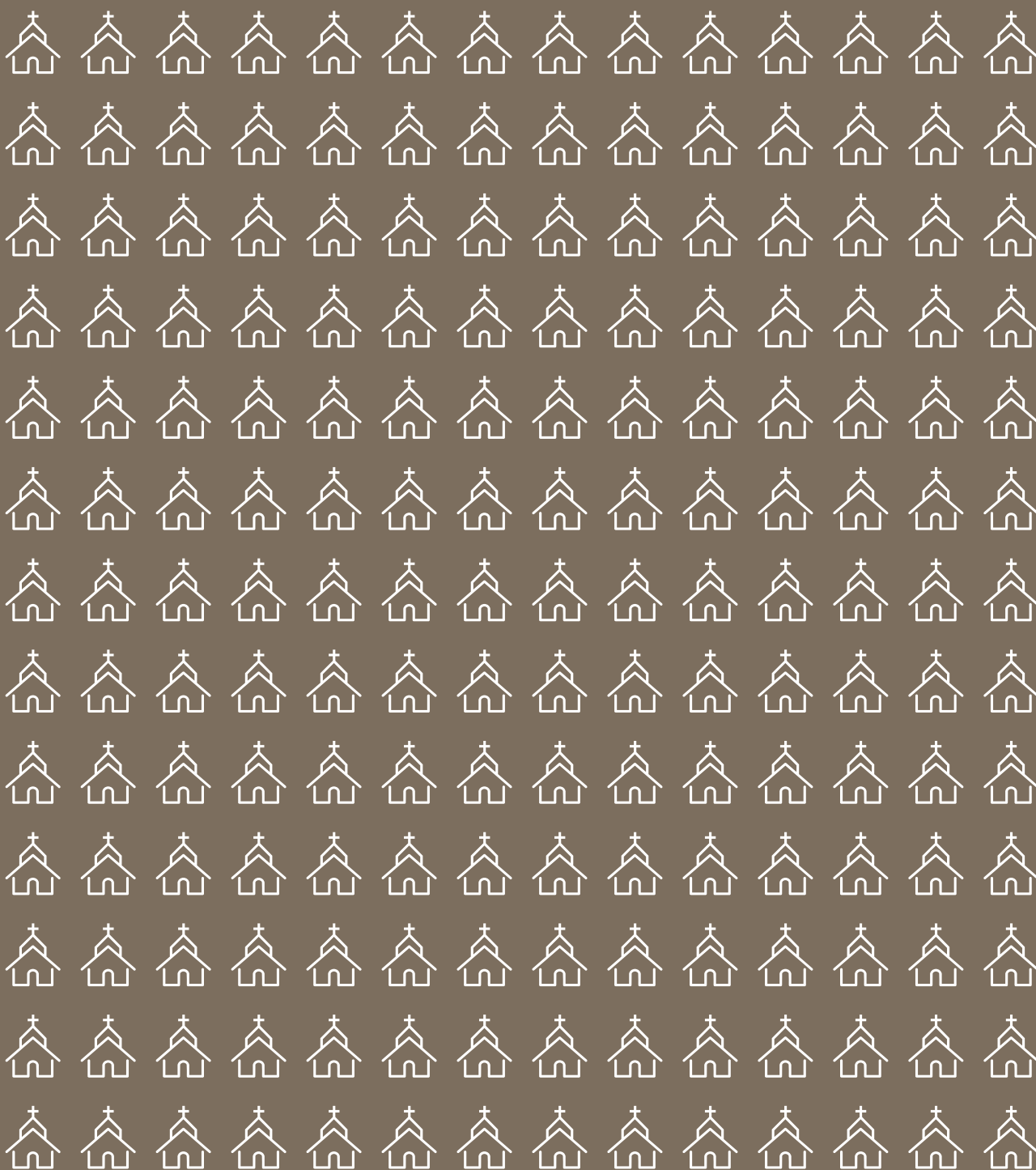
To see this vision to reality...

*The Uniting Church in Queensland is committed to **encouraging and equipping children and young people, from birth into adulthood, to grow in discipleship and authentic faith, and participate as valued and vital members of intergenerational churches and communities with Jesus at the centre.***

PRINCIPLES

The Uniting Church Queensland believes that:

- Children and Young people are **people of God**.
- Children and Young people are invited to be **lifelong disciples**, who know and follow Jesus, and help others do the same.
- Children and Young people **belong to the Body of Christ** and are called to serve with their own gifts, both as participants and leaders now and in the future.
- Children and Young people **grow in Christian Faith** as they experience and express their belonging, believing, growing, and sharing in family, church, and community.
- **God's spirit gives various gifts** to the church for ministry with Young People and the wider world, and we are called to use them.
- Intergenerational mission and ministry are the **privilege and responsibility** of every member of a Christian Faith community regardless of age, position, or status.



182 Congregations/Faith Communities

9 months of Research

What we researched

- The kinds of programs & activities children, youth and young adults are engaging in
- How young people are engaged in serving and leading in their communities

3

Research Description

Each congregation and faith community (local church) across the Synod was contacted using a mixed-method research methodology, allowing for information to be gathered about how younger generations were engaged within the life of the local church.

Topics covered include the kinds of programs and activities children, youth and young adults are engaging in, how young people are engaged in serving and leading in their communities, together with quantitative data. Local churches were asked to identify their strengths and challenges in engaging with younger generations and identify any training and supports that might help them to renew and grow their engagement with younger generations.

In most instances, a phone interview was conducted with the lead Ministry Agent of the congregation or faith community. Where there was a specialist Younger Generations worker or Pastor in location, they were also interviewed. Where there was no ministry agent in location, a member of church council was interviewed.

The research took place over a period of 9 months during 2025 and 2026, with follow up calls and emails to collect information as required. Presbytery Ministers were contacted first, to prioritise research, and identify relevant church contacts. Additional contact information came from the Synod Office “Sugar” database. The final

report considers 182 congregations/Faith communities, including two churches that provided no information, and a further five that were not in a position to discuss the topic at the time of contact.

Where possible, attendance data was cross-referenced with Annual Financial Return data accessed via the Synod Office Risk and Insurance team. There is some inconsistency across the data from these two sources, and missing data from many churches.

In addition, we collected similar information and data from Presbyteries, and from organisers of a range of camps and peak experiences being run by presbyteries, local churches, and local church networks.

As noted above, the research does not include data from Uniting Church schools, colleges, Uniting Early Learning (UEL), or agencies as they are not the focus of this report. We note that some churches are engaging with UCA schools, colleges and UEL services, and where possible this information was collected and is included.



4

Current Queensland Status

OVERALL ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Of 182 churches, over **60% intentionally engage with children**, over **50% with youth**, and over **40% with Young Adults** in some manner². In many places the engagement is limited and often led by just a few volunteers within a local church. Intentional engagement with families, and support for faith at home is very low, with **only 6%** of churches reporting work in this area.

ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

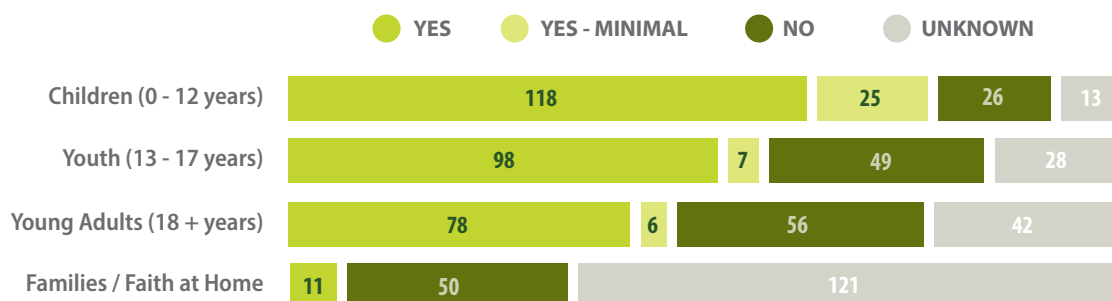


Figure 1 UCA Qld Church and Faith Communities Engagement with Younger Generations

During interviews, many churches initially indicated that they had no engagement with children. Further conversation elicited the realisation that there were a few children, or families that were connected and worshipping as part of their community. Other churches realised that the volunteering they were doing in local schools through RI and chaplaincy, could be considered engaging with young people. Many churches lamented that they were unable to run traditional Sunday School or Youth Group programs and so discounted the few young people attending their church as engagement.

A few churches indicated that they had unexpectedly had a few new young adults turn up, and were uncertain what to do with them, or how to engage them.

“Occasionally a young man will visit. We have been challenged by the young men coming looking for a church - and trying to get better at looking after, welcoming and being generous with them.”

² 15 of 118 churches that indicated yes to engaging with children reported 0 children in their 2025 annual return
 8 of 25 churches that indicated minimal children's engagement reported 0 children in their 2025 annual return
 8 of 26 churches that indicated no children's engagement reported 1 or more children in their 2025 annual return
 7 of 13 churches with unknown children's engagement reported 1 or more children in their 2025 annual return

WORSHIP, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Sunday School or Kids Church programs, and the inclusion of focussed content during worship remains the most common means of engagement with younger generations, particularly children. **Most churches (110 or 60%)** maintain some kind of **children's or intergenerational engagement** within the worship service. In some cases, this engagement may appear simplistic, or even tokenistic, appearing to use children as props or comic relief.³

Only 61 churches (33%) offer some form of **Sunday School or Kids Church programming during worship**. In these places, the children start in the worship service for songs, prayers or communion most weeks, and then move into another space for age-appropriate teaching and activities.

12 churches (7%) separate children in to age **segregated Sunday School or Kids Church**. In these places, children are completely separate from the adult worshipping community, and may only occasionally join worship for communion, or special services like child thanksgiving and baptisms



WORSHIP, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

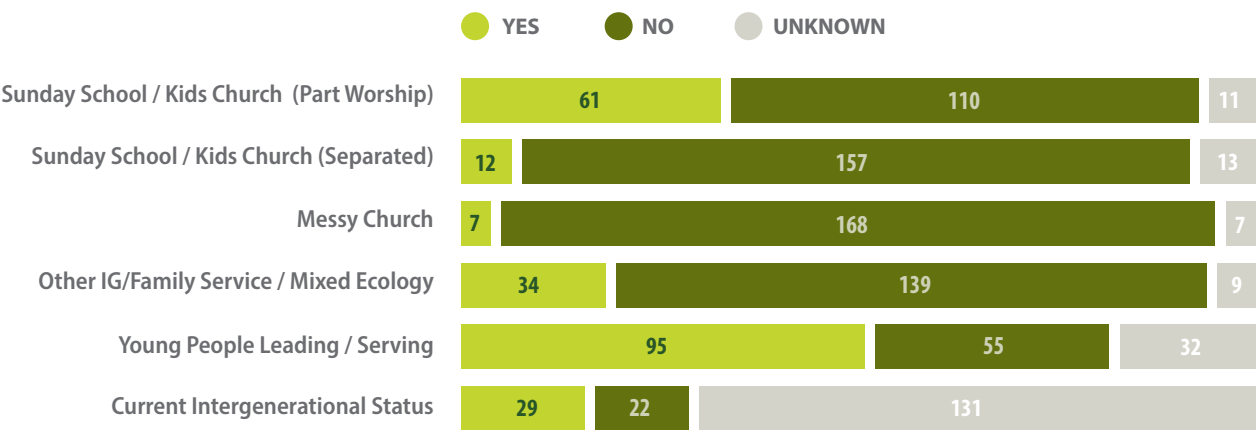


Figure 2 Number of Churches with Worship and Sunday School Engagement for Younger Generations

³ David M. Csinos, A Gospel for All Ages: Teaching and Preaching with the Whole Church. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022), 150.

4% of churches (**7 in total**) report **hosting a Messy Church**, usually once a month, and **19%** host another intergenerational or mixed ecology worship or gathering experience.⁴

“*Normal means we’re all in together for Intergenerational worship. We have activities in every service whether there are kids there or not as it’s not just for kids. Talking to others in the church, simple connection questions - turn to someone - preferably someone you didn’t arrive with.*”

29 churches expressed that they are **open, exploring or becoming more intergenerational** where intergenerationality includes reciprocity and mutuality. In some cases, these churches may consider themselves intergenerational but are more likely to be cross-generational or multi-generational in practice.

52% of local churches have **young people leading or serving** in a range ways, including:

- **Leading worship or church life** by playing music, singing, reading scripture, participating in dramas, preaching
- **Serving morning tea and food**
- **Leading youth and children’s ministries**
- **Membership of councils** including Church, Presbytery, Synod or Assembly.

In some churches this might be limited to young adults, but in others, much younger children are invited and supported to lead in age-appropriate ways.

In some churches where only a few children are present, they are actively involved in leading and serving, even if there are no specific programs or ministries for their age group. In others, children are not supported or encouraged to lead or serve, even when there are more than a few in the congregation.

“*We have no children’s programs at our church. We have one family with a 13-year-old daughter who attends the Christian College. She is also very willing to participate with the bible readings at our church services.*”

⁴ Including Family Services and Gatherings, Youth and Young Adult Worship, Music Jam, Youth and Family night, Family BBQ,

Intergenerational worship services, Families Dinners, Pizza night & Faith, Family, Food, Café Church, Family bible study, Prayer mornings, Community BBQ’s, 3:45, Coffee and Chat, the Garden YA, Breakfast Church, and Verandah meals.

Some churches are seeing small growth already, just by being open to what is going on around them, and reacting to young people showing up, and letting them serve and lead as they can.

“At the start of year we had zero young people, **now we’re averaging 5-15 kids.** We’ve had some preschool aged kids, so did a children’s story in church and now had some youth and young adults and younger kids start. We’ve started Youth Bible Study on Wednesday night and one of the Young Adults has started up Sunday School. Kids are coming out and doing an activity and bible story after starting in worship.”

Some churches have intentionally started to engage with young people by adding videos and stories in worship, running pilot youth nights, or being more intentionally Intergenerational and are experiencing positivity and growth.

“The congregation has grown in the time that I have been there (2 years). We’ve used Lost Sheep books for Christmas Carols and Day services. We get more comments on that than about the message from the adults (they like the stories) ... **We have a couple who’ve just started coming who’ve asked for the kids to be baptised.**”



ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Most church engagement with younger generations outside the context of gathered worship happens through organised or structured programs. **34 churches (19%)** run a **Playgroup or Mainly Music program**, with another six churches (**3%**) facilitating or hosting another group for children under five and their parents or guardians.⁵ **11 churches (6%)** run a faith-based **Children's Ministry for ages 0-12** such as KUCA (Kids of the Uniting Church Australia), Lego or Holiday Club, **38 (21%)** run faith-based **youth group for teenagers**, and **22 (12%)** run a faith-based group for **young adults**. An additional **2%** run a faith-based **youth group** in partnership with another church⁶, and one local church has a Young Adults group in the early stages of starting.

PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT

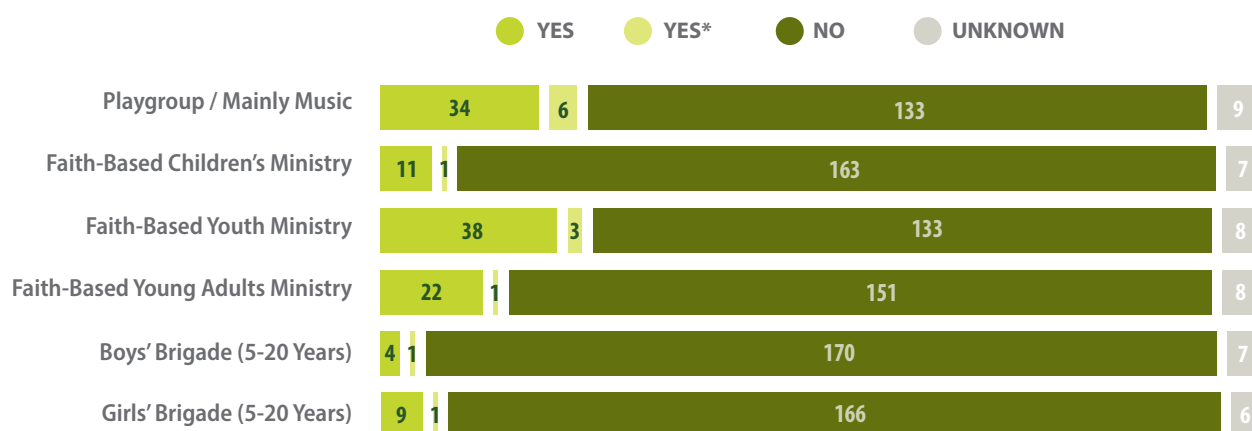


Figure 3 Number of Churches with Engagement with Younger Generations through Programs⁷

Some churches have recognised others in their area are better at engaging younger generations, and so have been recommending families look there, or leaning in and offering to share the load with them.

“There's a few churches in town that are good with the young ones – the Pentecostal church has some fun things happening for kids.”

⁵ 1 mums group run by church, 1 childminding group run by church while parents go elsewhere, 1 Mums and Bubs exercise class – external building tenant, 1 external playgroup using facilities, 2 community/neighbourhood centre playgroups.

⁶ 1 in shared relationship with local Church of Christ, 1 in shared relationship with other denominations of the town and hosted at each church on a rotational basis, 1 hosted by ACC in UC facilities under a hire agreement.

⁷ Yes* ministry doesn't fit the standard as noted in footnotes here

Nine churches (5%) host a Girls' Brigade (GB), and **four** churches (2%) host a Boys' Brigade (BB), with another BB and GB company hosted by other denominations in relationship with the local Uniting Church.⁸

*Boys' Brigade (founded 1883) and Girls' Brigade (founded 1893) are worldwide uniformed Christian movements that have partnered with and met in local churches for more than a century. Led by volunteers from local churches, the weekly program provides fun, faith, friendship, challenge and adventure for girls and boys in primary and high school. GB is **committed to seeing girls lives transformed and God's world enriched, helping girls and leaders seek, serve and follow Christ.**⁹ The purpose of BB is to provide a **supportive Christian community for boys and young men to assist in their Christian growth**, balanced personal development, and leadership training.¹⁰*

Both assist the church reaching out into the community and incorporate significant leadership development and mentoring opportunities within the program for participants and leaders.

Many churches are engaging young families through Playgroup, Mainly Music and similar programs where parents, caregivers and their children meet regularly with a leader or facilitator for play and social interaction. They vary in size and style from the simple small group of (mostly) mums that meet for coffee in a park, to a larger and semi-structured groups with toys, activities, songs and story time, to fully structured and well-planned educational activities, songs and stories. Some meet once a week in a shared space, with others facilitated every day of the week in a dedicated playgroup room, typically catering to a larger group. Some choose to affiliate and enjoy the benefits of advertising and support of the Christian Playgroup Network (CPN) or with Playmatters (formerly Playgroup Queensland).

“Playgroup has 17-20 children every week with a good mix of new and established families... we have a bachelor trained early childhood teacher and have tried to make it more of a ministerial approach, rather than educational approach... we offer prayer before they go home, and a story and Christian early childhood song.”

*Church playgroups enable Christians as the people of God to share their faith, and support families of little or no church background, as they raise children in their community. **Often, playgroups have the highest number of non-churched attendees of any ministry of the church, what an opportunity for mission!** Playgroups are “a relaxed and strategic space where the kingdom of God belongs easily, and where stories of God and celebrations such as Easter and Christmas can be introduced and celebrated.”¹¹*

⁸ 1 GB company Hosted at the Anglican Church – was hosted at UC in past, 1 BB company Hosted at the Lutheran Church – was hosted at UC in past – UC Pastor is still involved relationally with the leaders and participants of both.

⁹ girlsbrigade.org.au/about-us/aims-principles-values/

¹⁰ boysbrigade.org.au/about-bb/

¹¹ What Happens at Playgroup, Christian Playgroup Network cpn.org.au/what-happens-at-playgroup/

OTHER PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

Some churches are engaged with other organisations that support and engage younger people such as community centre run holiday clubs, role-playing games group and youth support programs.

The ORCA Project, a Wesley Mission Queensland program, facilitates work skills and readiness programs for young adults with additional needs in partnership with three Uniting Churches in Queensland. At the time of writing, the future for the ORCA Project appears unclear.

While the content of these programs may not be specifically faith based, they provide a soft entry point and connection with the church, and a demonstration of witness through the welcome, and love that is shown during these times. These are the gospel in action.

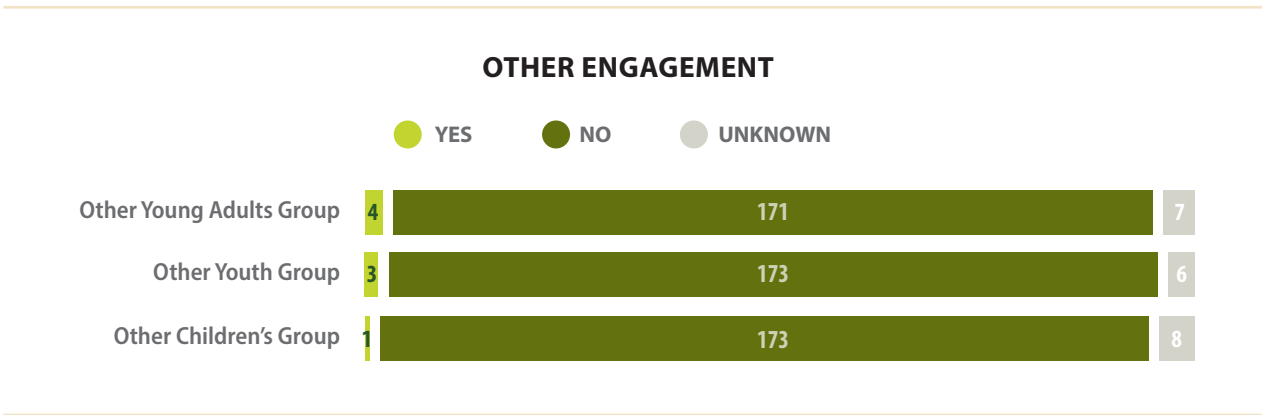


Figure 4 Numbers of Churches with Other Program Engagement

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SCHOOLS AND EARLY LEARNING

46 churches (25%) are engaging with local schools through chaplaincy in a range of ways including financial support, volunteers in Chaplaincy support groups, volunteers supporting and running school breakfast programs in partnership with Chaplain/s and the wider school community, providing hampers and gifts for school community, or the school Chaplain is member of the local UCA church/faith community. One church shares staff in 50/50 Pastor/school Chaplain roles with a co-located Christian college, others share a ministry agent in similar Pastor/state school Chaplain roles.

35 churches (19%) are engaged in Christian Religious Instruction (RI) with a local school. **At least 29** of these churches supply volunteer instructors, at least three give financial support and some do both.

Only three churches are partnered with a local school to provide Kids Hope Mentors, despite at the time of writing there being **12** Schools near Uniting Churches waiting for a church to partner with them to provide hope and support to their young people through this program¹².

Four churches are engaged with UCA schools with the relationship varying in each¹³. Some are co-located and fully integrated with staff working across the church and school, while others are starting or rebuilding relationships. **15** churches are engaged with early learning services, which includes all UEL services and two non-UEL centres. Engagement varies at each centre, examples including the Grand Friends program, supportive or missional relationships, ministry agent time in the centre, shared use of facilities, and combined church, playgroup, centre visits or events.

SCHOOL AND EARLY LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

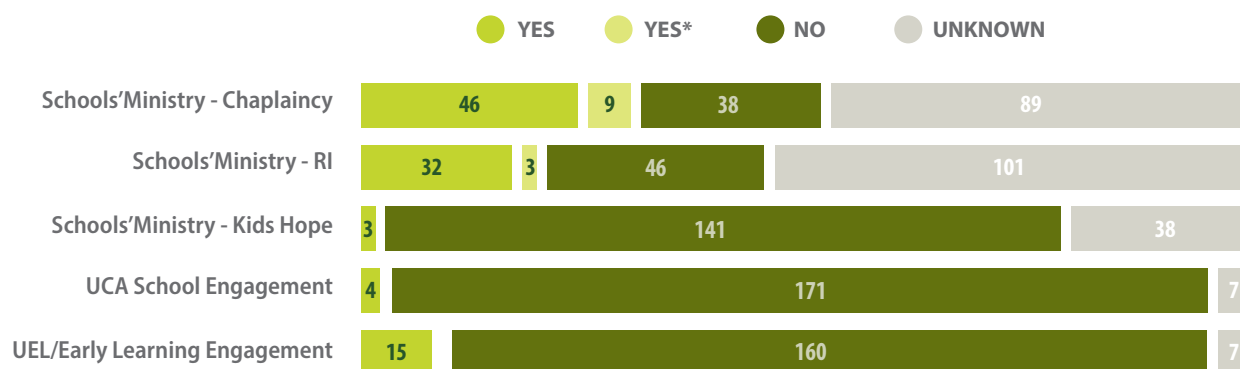


Figure 5 Number of Churches Engaging with Younger Generations through Schools and Early Learning¹⁴

¹² Rockville SS, Deception Bay SS, Gatton SS, Hambledon SS, Waterford SS, Yarrabilba SS, Deebling Heights SS, Alexandra Hills SS, Vincent SS, Grovely SS, Eight Mile Plains SS, Moreton Downs SS. kidshope.org.au

¹³ North Lakes College: Newlife Moreton and North Lakes Uniting Church; Calvary Christian College: Real Life Community Church; Scott's PGC: Warwick Killarney UC.

¹⁴ Yes* Unsure of nature of engagement in these locations.

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PEAK EXPERIENCES

A little over 25% of churches indicated that they engage younger generations through some kind of camping or peak experiences.¹⁵

A peak experience is a vital complement to the regular activities within the faith community. A peak experience is a place where God meets you, stretches you, and inspires you, when (He) comes close to you and you come close to (Him) and transformation happens.¹⁶

Some churches (usually where there is strong youth and children's ministry and staff or strong leaders) facilitate their own camps for youth, children and young adults. Some churches host camps in partnership with SU or other organisations. Boys' and Girls' Brigade usually includes some kind of camping or peak experiences within the program, especially for older participants.

When unable to support camping experiences themselves, churches have worked collaboratively to facilitate camping experiences for children.

Day Camps have been part of the Uniting Church calendar for many years and still run in six locations, organised by presbyteries and either individual or groups of local congregations. These provide peak experiences for children as campers, while also providing opportunities for leadership development and faith formation for youth and adult leaders.

CAMPING & PEAK EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT

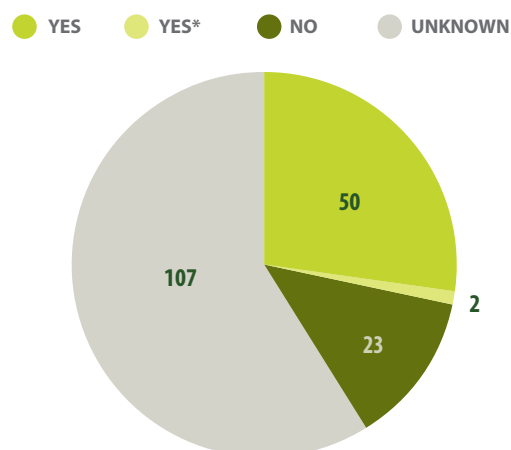
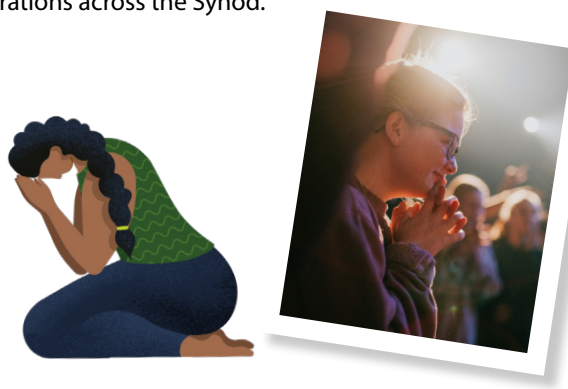


Figure 6 Number of Churches with Engagement of Younger Generations through Camping and Peak Experiences¹⁷

Easter Madness is an annual youth camp coordinated by Moreton Rivers Presbytery and provides a shared peak experience opportunity for both youth campers, and the young and older adult leaders that volunteer as leaders and helpers.

The newly formed Axios young adult network in south-east Queensland organises camps, praise nights and other events that provide peak experiences for young and emerging adults within and adjacent to the Uniting Church.

Appendix B provides a more detailed examination of the range of major camps and peak experiences for younger generations across the Synod.



¹⁵ Camping and Peak Experience engagement includes Day Camp participants, leaders, young leaders, Easter Madness participants, leaders, young leaders, facilitating own Holiday club or camp for children or youth, attending or hosting SU Australia or other Holiday club, camp or similar for children or youth, or young members of Synod in Session.

¹⁶ Here2Stay research report here2stay.org.au/8pillars/

¹⁷ Yes* At the time of interview, these churches were not yet engaged in camping ministry but were exploring and hoping to be soon.

MUTH ARRAK AND ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Across the UAICC communities of the Qld Synod, many are engaging with younger generations, both through church led and community run programs, events and activities.

In 2025 a large group of First Peoples youth, young adults, leaders and elders attended Easter Madness, including from Napranum and Zillmere.

In partnership with other local churches, Zillmere has been running a youth group, attending Samford Day Camp, and have a group of keen young adults. Napranum have been recruiting a new church council and looking to get some youth to inform council of ways to move forward with youth ministry in the community. The Napranum for Christ Crusade also ran for several years in Napranum, with dedicated youth nights, and leaders and youth coming from Emmanuel Cairns to support. In 2026 it will be run as the Aurukun for Christ Crusade, in Aurukun.

At the Muth arrak gathering in July 2025, a new strategic plan was formed, with a focus on looking at a structured framework for youth. The strategy includes priorities, practices and outcomes of: ¹⁸

- **Support people** — especially young people — to test and grow their calling,
- Walking with young people as they **explore vocation**
- **Creating safe spaces** for questioning, growth, and failure
- Leadership that **toils for future generations**
- **Investment** in children, youth, and emerging leaders
- **Making space for youth** in Congress and church life
- **Intergenerational** faith continuity

“Our strengths as a congregation are being there for young people, being consistent, showing up and supporting them, and being encouraging”

¹⁸ Capturing the Dreaming and Vision Casting, Muth arrak Strategy. Muth arrak gathering July 2025.

CALD COMMUNITIES AND ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Many Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) church communities engage younger generations through a combination of family, culture, and relationships. Children and young people are often involved in the life of the whole church, worshipping alongside adults, and elders. They learn through participating in worship, cultural events, music, choir, language, service, and community activities. Family members, church leaders, and elders play an important role in guiding and encouraging young people in their faith.

This approach can be different from some mainstream or predominantly anglo congregations, where youth ministry is often organised through separate age-based programs. For CALD communities, young people are encouraged to be part of the wider church community and to contribute through worship, and service from an early age. A strong sense of belonging, respect for elders, cultural identity, and community responsibility are often important parts of youth engagement in these settings.

One unique challenge for predominantly CALD or multicultural communities can be supporting second generation youth and young adults to both recognise and value culturally inherited practices of discipleship and leadership, while also exploring approaches common in the wider community.



“One of our challenges is the 2nd Gen cultural gap between Vietnamese and English. We also find that we lose our young adults at university age.”

”



LEADERSHIP AND FORMATION

At the time of writing, there were **69** churches with full-time ministers and **46** with part-time Ministers. Our research indicated that in **12** of these churches, the minister is actively engaged, and in **64** the minister is supportive of ministry with younger generations. There were three Ministers in specific younger generations roles and **15** churches with Pastors in Younger Generations roles

16 churches had Paid Pastors in Younger Generations roles, and **20** churches had Pastors actively engaged in ministry with younger generations.

Additional there were **eight** other paid children/youth/families' workers, and four paid Playgroup workers across the state.

Our research supported anecdotal evidence that there has been limited avenues for training, coaching and leadership development in engaging younger generations, especially in formation for ministry agents in the recent past. There are currently no accredited units available through Trinity College for the formation of leaders in children's, youth, young adult or intergenerational ministry, and there hasn't been for some years.

This indicates that we have not been intentionally or significantly forming our ministry agents for the work of engaging younger generations in our churches through structured formation processes. Those that have been trained have either sourced this training from outside of the Uniting Church in places like Amplify¹⁹ and Leaders 2 Go²⁰, or undertaken training and formation many years ago. The limited number of trained practitioners in this space contributes to the challenge around recruiting for the few specified roles that are available. There have been several examples of Children's, Youth and Families specialist ministry roles advertised and unfilled within the Synod for periods in excess of six months.

STAFFING OF CONGREGATIONS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES

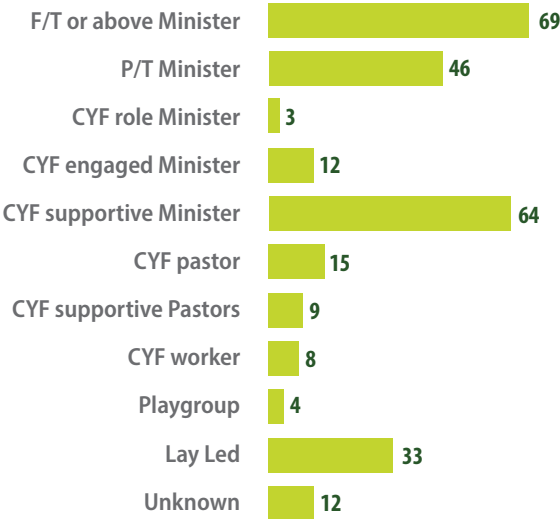


Figure 7 CYF Specified Ministers, Pastors and Workers in Congregations and Faith Communities

It remains concerning that training and formation for engagement and support of young people is limited. The work of engaging younger generations is a church-wide issue and requires a church-wide response. Having people in specialised roles helps to support the work of the congregation/ faith community by giving focussed time, energy and specialised knowledge in these places. Where this is missing, there can be apathy for the work, and a sense of discouragement to even try.

¹⁹ Amplify is a yearly children, youth and family ministry conference amplifyconference.com.au/

²⁰ Leaders 2 Go, is a biennial children and family ministry leadership conference conference.leaderstogo.org.au/

While leadership is an issue, the work of engaging younger generations still does happen, however limited. It is often led by lay people in congregations walking alongside young people to support, mentor and encourage them in their life. Both New Life and Real-Life congregations have developed in-house support and training for their lay people, an approach which appears to be bearing fruit and may offer lessons for other parts of our church.

There is some exciting work that has been started in the last few years with the potential to be foundational in forming young people, and leaders for engaging younger generations in the future.

Examples of this include Easter Madness, Axios, new residential and internship leadership programs, and new workshops available for formation candidates through Trinity College. Incorporating and expanding upon these opportunities within any revised approach to formation with the Synod will be vital.

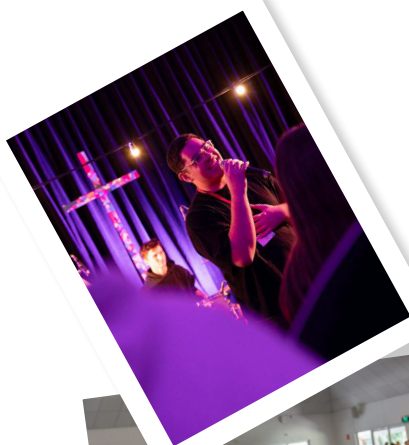
CHAPLAINCY AT EASTER MADNESS

In 2024, a gap was identified in the pastoral support available for volunteer leaders at Easter Madness, creating an opportunity to intentionally mentor and develop emerging leaders in the ministry of chaplaincy. A leader chaplaincy space was established, inviting a small group of leaders who had previously attended Easter Madness as participants and later small group leaders and helpers, and whose gifts for leadership, encouragement and walking alongside others had been recognised over time.

One leader reflected, "I thought only ministers or pastors could be Chaplains at a youth camp," highlighting the value of creating a pathway for emerging leaders to discover and develop their gifts in pastoral care and chaplaincy. Several leaders expressed a desire to continue serving in this ministry beyond their first experience as Chaplains.

Following Easter Madness 2025, this newly established chaplaincy team was invited to participate in a discernment weekend with the planning team, helping shape the theme and scripture focus for Easter Madness 2026. This was an encouraging experience for the leaders, helping them see chaplaincy as a ministry of both care and spiritual leadership. In preparation for Easter Madness 2026, basic chaplaincy training was provided to further equip the team in pastoral care and leadership

This ministry will not only strengthen pastoral support for leaders and participants at Easter Madness, but will create pathways for leadership development, spiritual formation and the nurturing of emerging leaders within the life of the Church.



RESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM - TOOWONG UNITING CHURCH

Toowong is one of several congregations planning and preparing for young adult leadership development programs. Its Residential Leadership Program (RLP) is a project due to launch in August 2026 as a 10-week leadership program for young people from across Qld (or beyond). Participants will be provided accommodation near the church, have a mentor to provide support, undertake a unit at Trinity College and have hands on leadership and ministry training. Toowong are hoping to have a small group of participants who are interested in growing in their leadership skills, seeking God's plan for them, and strengthening their faith.

More details at

toowongunitingchurch.org/rlp

FORMATION INTERNSHIPS - MORETON RIVERS PRESBYTERY

Moreton Rivers Presbytery's Formation Internships are fully funded opportunities to enter ministry through a guided formation pathway in a supportive and empowering context for their leadership development. Oriented to young adult participants, it is a 2-year program involving: study through CML (Centre for Ministry and Leadership), involvement in ministry within a local congregation, other short term ministry experiences, a Period of Discernment, ministry coaching, and a ministry companion who will provide mentoring and/or spiritual direction. Two interns have started in Emmanuel and Redcliffe, with more due to start at other congregations in 2026.

More details at cml.org.au/internship/

FORMATION - TRINITY COLLEGE QUEENSLAND AND MISSION ACCOMPANYING TEAM

Trinity College Qld has developed a new formation plan, including the addition of specialized engaging younger generations workshops and workbooks written by the Synod's Mission Accompanying Team for candidates and Trinity students. Trinity plans to offer these two-hour workshops over a two-year cycle, make them open to all and available for use in local churches for training and equipping.

The topics include:

- ✓ Being an **Intergenerational Church**
- ✓ Ministry with **Children & their Families**
- ✓ **Youth Ministry**
- ✓ **Young Adults**

More information at:

trinity.qld.edu.au/short-courses-online/ and
trinity.qld.edu.au/hybrid-in-person-online/



YOUNG PEOPLE AT SYNOD IN SESSION

The Moderator and Synod Business Committee encouraged congregations to support young people (aged 16+) and their mentors to attend Synod in Session in May 2025 as full voting members. The Moderator gave a portion of his report time to two young people to share their stories. These were encouraging for all. Plans for increasing the numbers of younger generations, especially young adults at the next Synod in Session in October 2026 are underway.

CULTURE CHANGE AND RENEWAL

As noted earlier, one of the key commitments for Project Plenty was to “Foster a renewed discipleship culture within the church through modelling, educating, training and equipping.”²¹ While it may be difficult to see in some places, there has been a gradual shift in the discipleship culture of the Uniting Church in Queensland over recent years. Similarly, the Plenty priority of “Reawaken an understanding and passion for working with children, youth, young adults and families (CYAF) across the life of the church”²² is also being enacted and experienced in some places.

We have been focusing on renewal since the 37th Synod, and while some of us may be tired of hearing it, and ready to move on, there are some that are just starting to get it and come on board. As it is with any change process, there are innovators who lead the way, early adopters and majority follow, and then the late majority and laggards²³. Our observations suggest that in the Uniting Church in Queensland that in engaging younger generations, we might be at the stage of early adopters, as we are seeing that people are starting to understand and get on board. If so, we can't stop now, we must keep going, we must remain committed to renewal and growth of younger generations across the Synod and invite ongoing commitment.

“*I recognise that culture is a powerful thing in effective church ministry - and so this has been a main focus point of mine over recent months - establishing a 'family and intergenerational mindset' amongst the congregation in ways of worship style and interactions, rather than a service to simply accommodate and appeal to the elder generation only. I feel that has been a long-established habit over the years and the fruit still shows. Our church numbers and attendance are slowly changing in recent months, and we are trusting that God will continue to lead us in the new year, for how we can reach our young people and see fruit from it.*”

“*I was impacted by one of the presenters at Synod... their comment, 'If you have no young people in your own congregation, how can you support the churches in your community who do have them?' Bringing that thought home, I have mentioned this in meetings etc, and whilst not actively able to "lead a youth group", our congregations are extremely supportive of the School Chaplaincy programme and are looking for ways to aid within our demographic, fundraising and helping where they can for chaplaincy.*”

²¹ Shared life, flourishing communities, Plenty Progress Report. The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, October 2021.

²² Shared life, flourishing communities, Plenty Progress Report. The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, October 2021.

²³ Everett Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, 5th Ed. In Engage all Generations: A Strategic Toolkit for Creating Intergenerational Faith Communities, ed. Cory Seibel (Abilene: Christian University Press, 2021), 210.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES, WEAKNESSES, STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Church representatives were asked during interviews to identify their strengths and challenges in engaging with younger generations and identify training and supports that might help them to better engage.



STRENGTHS

While some churches struggled to identify their strengths, those that could suggested things like:

- School relationships
- Playgroup/Mainly Music
- Inclusive and welcoming culture
- Location close to school, early learning or community centre
- Committed youth and young adults' leadership
- Minister/Pastor is experienced/passionate in children, youth and families ministry (CYF)
- Good facilities/ building, and good/strong/skilled volunteers.



CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESSES

Challenges and weaknesses were often easier to identify. **The top four challenges** articulated, with 20+ responses each, being:

- Lack of children
- Lack of youth
- Small/ageing/tired congregation; and
- Lack of or ageing volunteers.

Other challenges named include:

- Traditional Music/worship style
- Poor facilities/ space/ building issues
- Low engagement with/capacity for discipling young adults
- Lack of finances/resources
- Neurodiversity/disability/ behavioural challenges
- Safe Church Training
- Limited/lack of leadership capacity
- Unwilling to try new things/stuck in old ways
- Commitment from parents
- Inconsistent/sporadic attendance
- Competing with other/ stronger churches

“We have no structured Children’s and Youth programs. Without a minister in the past, we made the decision not to focus on this space. Now we desire to look more intentionally into Youth and children’s ministry. We are currently bare bones and exploring what we can do, and what people resources we have.”

TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDS

When asked to identify what would be most helpful in supporting them to engage younger generations, many congregations struggled to articulate such factors



Among the more common responses were:

- Networking
- Encouragement
- Training and coaching for intergenerational, children’s, youth and young adult ministries and for parents and families
- Staff with specialist skills
- Safe Church Training
- Funding/finances
- Support for vision/mission/strategy
- Young adult training/gap year/intern/apprenticeship
- Sunday School and ministry resources
- Support for events/programs
- Combined youth and young adult events/programs/camps

“Connecting with peers in similar roles/demographics/needs to connect and support each other. Maybe facilitated by synod staff, monthly/fortnightly to discuss a topic and hear from others what they are doing and how they are managing things.”

“We need support in how to disciple all ages and get alongside children and young people in a discipling/relational way. Also, for developing and supporting youth and young adult ministry.”





5

Key Findings

While this report has been conducted by the Mission Accompanying Team, its content, including the following key findings and recommendations, are for consideration and appropriate action by the whole of the Queensland Synod and all Presbyteries, congregations, and the Synod Office and departments within it.

The findings identified within the paper will inform the ongoing work of the Synod's Mission Accompanying Team in Engaging Younger Generations, to be further detailed in a separate strategy and operational plan.

5.1 Engagement with Younger Generations is limited, uneven, and often fragile

Most churches engage children (**65%**), youth (**53%**), and young adults (around **40%**), but the engagement is often light and dependent on a few volunteers. Often sustainability of numbers of participants is an issue as well as challenges around sustaining volunteers.

Of the 118 churches that say they engage with children, only **73** offer some form of Sunday School or Kids Church programming during Sunday services, and only 11 run another faith-based Children's Ministry like KUCA (Kids of the Uniting Church Australia), Lego or Holiday Club. While **98** churches say they engage with youth, only **38** run a **faith-based youth group** for teenagers, and while **78** churches say they engage with young adults, only **22** run a **faith-based group** for them. Additionally, of the 143 churches that say they engage with children, **23 reported zero children** in their annual report. The annual report does not capture numbers of youth or young adult numbers in our churches, so we cannot make observations about this.



5.2 Churches know their challenges but struggle to name solutions and strategically plan and move forward

Churches are aware of the areas they need to develop in but lack the framework from which to identify and develop sustainable solutions.

TOP CHALLENGES:

- Lack of children (**26**)
- Lack of youth (**24**)
- Ageing congregations (**23**)
- Lack of volunteers (**21**)

TOP NEEDS:

- Networking and encouragement
- Training (intergenerational, youth, children, young adults, neurodiversity)
- Specialist staff
- Vision/mission strategic planning support
- Funding

5.3 Leadership and formation capacity is critically low

There is a shortage of trained ministry agents and specialist workers, generally, and for Engaging Younger Generations.

At the time of conducting the report, **only 2 ordained and 14 pastors** are in specified younger generations roles across the entire Synod.

There has been limited avenues for training, coaching and leadership development in engaging younger generations, especially in formation for ministry agents. In addition, up until recently there have been limited options for young leader development and training across the Synod.

5.4 Intergenerational worship and ministry is common but often tokenistic

There are the beginnings of a strong foundation for developing Intergenerational ministry across the Synod. **60% of churches include children in worship.** However, many practices are in their infancy in terms of developing Intergenerational practice, culture and understanding. **There are 29 churches that are genuinely exploring intergenerational culture change,** and this is a good basis to build upon.

5.5 Midweek programs exist but are not connected to discipleship pathways

Playgroups are relatively widespread (**19%, 22%** including Mainly Music), but churches rarely connect families into the broader life of the church. These are significant but underdeveloped missional opportunities.

Youth groups exist in **21%** of churches; young adult groups in **12%**, children's ministry in **6%**, Boys' Brigade in **5%**, Girls' Brigade in **2%**. But this engagement often isn't transitioned into further discipleship or missional opportunities.

5.6 School engagement is strong but underutilised

Many churches engage in some way through chaplaincy (**25%**) and Religious Instruction (**19%**), but few take next steps such as Kids Hope partnerships (**only 3 churches**) or intentionally building relationships with children and families beyond the school-based program.

5.7 Families and faith-at-home support is critically low

Only 6% of churches intentionally support faith at home, despite this being the strongest predictor of long-term faith formation for children and young people. In some places there is willingness from parents, grandparents or caregivers to support children and young people's faith development, but a lack of support, resources and understanding from the church or faith community they are in.

5.8 Camps and Peak Experiences are a major strength

Fewer than 30% of churches engage children and young people through camps, day camps, Easter Madness, or leadership programs. Peak experiences are significant discipleship cornerstones and a foundational part of a young person's faith journey. While peak experiences are not the only way to encounter God, they can be a powerful tool for deepening faith and drawing closer to God in an extended and wider context. This has been evidenced in various wider research and frameworks around faith development such as Here2Stay²⁴.



²⁴ Here2Stay research report here2stay.org.au/8pillars/



6

Potential Actions and Responses

Based on the research and findings, these are the following potential actions and responses for consideration and appropriate action by the whole of the Queensland Synod and its presbyteries, congregations and entities.

6.1 Support Churches to start small, localized and contextual ministries

Many churches feel overwhelmed or under-resourced.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Provide “first steps” guides for churches with no children or youth
- Encourage and facilitate strategic regional collaboration and shared ministries
- Support and equip churches to engage in mission planning and strategy setting
- Support appropriate churches to access, apply for and implement MC3 Funding for new mission initiatives
- Further support and equip churches in Safeguarding and building a Safe Church Culture

6.2 Strengthen leadership formation and specialist training

Prioritize across all areas of the Synod, the training and equipping of those currently working and wanting to work in ministry with younger generations.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Re-establish specialist formation pathways
- Create compulsory Younger Generations foundation training modules for ordinands
- Develop access to and funding for accredited training for children, youth, young adult, and intergenerational ministry
- Expand Trinity College’s engaging younger generations workshops including training to support work with Neurodiverse Children and Young People
- Promote and support presbytery- or congregation-based young adult internships in a variety of accessible formats (e.g., Moreton Rivers model)
- Develop a Synod-wide coaching network for Younger Generations leaders
- Provide training, coaching and mentoring for ministry agents and lay leaders
- Support presbyteries and congregations to develop internship and leadership pathways
- Further support training and resourcing for Safeguarding and Safe Church practices



6.3 Increase Specialist Younger Generations Staffing across the Synod

Increase the amount of ministry agents and specialist workers for Engaging Younger Generations at both congregational and presbytery levels. This is crucial priority for ensuring the future of the Uniting Church in Queensland.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Ensure that there is at least one full-time Younger Generations role in each presbytery within the suggested new Presbytery model
- Children, families and intergenerational, and youth and young adults' ministries are distinct fields, and so best practice would indicate that having both a children's, families and intergenerational ministry specialist, alongside a youth and young adult specialist in each presbytery would be highly beneficial
- Support presbyteries to employ regional/zone younger generations workers in partnership with local congregations
- Create funding opportunities for employing specialist Younger Generation workers



6.4 Build Intergenerational Culture, not just Programs

Churches need help shifting from tokenistic inclusion to genuine intergenerational discipleship.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Provide intergenerational coaching and workshops for churches ready to take the next step
- Develop and share intergenerational worship and discipleship resources
- Support churches to redesign/reshape/remodel worship spaces and practices
- Promote and share stories of models where congregations are already shifting culture

6.5 Develop Playgroups, Mid-week programs and School Engagement as Missional and Discipleship Pathways

Playgroups, school ministries and Brigades are the largest points of contact with non-churched families. Many churches, however, need to be supported in developing these initial connections into opportunities for discipleship.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Provide training and resources for connecting playgroup and mid-week program families into church life
- Support churches to deepen chaplaincy and school relationships
- Equip churches to work alongside organisations such as Boys' and Girls' Brigade to strengthen and deepen relationships
- Develop practical and resourced "next step" pathways from playgroup → family events → worship/discipleship pathways

6.6 Strengthen Faith-at-Home and Family Discipleship

As explored earlier, this is the most underdeveloped area and potentially one of the most significant for long-term faith development.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Equip Churches with Parenting for Faith-style training
- Enable Churches to access simple weekly faith-at-home resources
- Train ministry agents to model and teach family discipleship

6.7 Strengthen Camps and Peak Experiences

Camps are one of the strongest discipleship and leadership development tools.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

- Support expansion of Day Camps to more regions
- Support Easter Madness with additional chaplaincy and leadership pathways
- Support development of a northern or regional youth camp
- Support further development of young adult camps and peak experiences
- Provide administration, logistical, safety, and Blue Card support for camp organisers



Appendix **A**

APPENDIX A

Research Data

1. OVERALL ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

	Yes	Yes - Minimal	No	Unknown
Engagement with children (0-12years)	118 ²⁵	25 ²⁶	26 ²⁷	13 ²⁸
Engagement with Youth (13-18years)	98	7	49	28
Engagement with Young Adults (19+years)	78	6	56	42
Engagement with Families/Faith at Home	11	0	50	121

2. WORSHIP, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

	Yes	No	Unknown
Children's/IG engagement in worship	110	33	39
Sunday School/Kids Church (part worship)	61 ²⁹	110	11
Sunday School/Kids Church (separated)	12 ³⁰	157	13
Messy Church	7	168	7
Young people leading/serving	95	55	32
Other IG/Family service/mixed ecology	34	139	9
Intergenerational Status	34 ³¹	22	126

²⁵ 15 reported 0 children in their 2025 annual return

²⁶ 8 reported 0 children in their 2025 annual return

²⁷ 8 reported 1 or more children in their 2025 annual return

²⁸ 7 reported 1 or more children in their 2025 annual return

²⁹ These churches start or finish in whole church worship, and children are separated into kid's church or Sunday school for part. Some weeks children may stay in adult worship for holidays, communion, baptisms and other special services.

³⁰ These churches separate children most weeks into Sunday School or Kids Church, before Worship starts. Some weeks they might attend adult worship for communion, baptisms or other special services.

³¹ 29 churches are open, exploring, or becoming more intergenerational in practice, where Intergenerationality includes mutuality and reciprocity in relationship. 5 churches may be more multi- or cross- generational in practice.

3. ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

	Yes	Yes*	No	Unknown
Playgroup/Mainly Music	34 ³²	6 ³³	133	9
Faith Based Children's Ministry	11	1 ³⁴	163	8
Faith based Youth Ministry	38	3 ³⁵	133	8
Faith based Young Adults Ministry	22	1 ³⁶	151	8
Girls' Brigade (5-20years)	9	1 ³⁷	166	6
Boys' Brigade (5-20years)	4	1 ³⁸	170	7

4. OTHER ENGAGEMENT

	Yes	No	Unknown
Other Children's group	1 ³⁹	173	8
Other Youth Group	3 ⁴⁰	173	6
Other Young Adults Group	4 ⁴¹	171	7

³² Includes 12 Mainly Music Programs and 22 Playgroups of other nature – some affiliated with Play Matters Australia (formerly Playgroup Qld), some affiliated with Christian Playgroup Network (CPN)

³³ 1 mums group run by church, 1 childminding group run by church while parents go elsewhere, 1 Mums and Bubs exercise class – external building tenant, 1 external playgroup using facilities, 2 community/neighbourhood centre playgroups.

³⁴ 1 hosted by ACC in UC facilities under a hire agreement

³⁵ 1 in shared relationship with local Church of Christ, 1 in shared relationship with other denominations of the town and hosted at each church on a rotational basis, 1 hosted by ACC in UC facilities under a hire agreement

³⁶ 1 in early stages of starting

³⁷ 1 company Hosted at the Anglican Church – was hosted at UC in past – UC Pastor is still in relationship with leaders and participants

³⁸ 1 company Hosted at the Lutheran Church – was hosted at UC in past – UC Pastor is still in relationship with leaders and participants

³⁹ Community centre run Youth & Children's holiday program

⁴⁰ 1 Church youth group run outside church starting soon, 1 youth support program run by external operator, supported by church, 1 community centre children's & youth holiday club

⁴¹ 3 ORCA Project (Wesley Mission Qld NDIS-approved work skills training for young adults who value additional support) programs happening on site at these churches, 1 community centre role-playing games group.

5. ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SCHOOLS AND EARLY LEARNING

	Yes	Yes*	No	Unknown
Schools' ministry - Chaplaincy/other	46 ⁴²	9 ⁴³	38	89
Schools' ministry - RI	32 ⁴⁴	3 ⁴⁵	46	101
Schools' ministry - Kids Hope	3	-	141 ⁴⁶	38
UEL/early childhood engagement	15 ⁴⁷	-	160	7
UCA school engagement	4 ⁴⁸	-	171	7

6. CAMPING AND PEAK EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT

	Yes	Yes*	No	Unknown
Camping and Peak Experience Engagement	50 ⁴⁹	2 ⁵⁰	23	107

7. SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP

	Yes	No	Unknown
Youth and Young Adults in leadership roles	33 ⁵¹	52 ⁵²	97
Support for Young people in leadership	52	-	130

⁴² Chaplaincy programs are supported by churches in number of ways including financial, volunteers on Chaplaincy support group, volunteers supporting and running school breakfast programs, in relationship with chaplain and wider school community, providing hampers and gifts for school community, or school Chaplain member of UCA church/faith community. 1 church shares staff in 50/50 Pastor/school chaplain roles with co-located Christian college, others share ministry agent in similar Pastor/state school chaplain roles.

⁴³ Unsure of nature of engagement in these places. Children's Pastor is in school in one of these locations – unsure of capacity

⁴⁴ At least 29 of these churches supply volunteer instructors, and at least 3 give financial support, some do both.

⁴⁵ Unsure of nature of engagement in these places.

⁴⁶ There are at least 12 schools looking for a Kids Hope partner church in/near UCA church locations including: Rockville SS, Deception Bay SS, Gatton SS, Hambledon SS, Waterford SS, Yarrabilba SS, Deebling Heights SS, Alexandra Hills SS, Vincent SS, Grovely SS, Eight Mile Plains SS, Moreton Downs SS.

⁴⁷ Includes all UEL services and 2 non-UEL centres. Engagement varies at each centre and may include Grand Friends Program, supportive / missional relationship, ministry agent time in centre, shared use of facilities, combined church/playgroup/centre visit/events, etc.

⁴⁸ North Lakes College – Newlife Moreton and North Lakes Uniting Church, Calvary Christian College – Real Life Community Church, Scott's PGC – Warwick Killarney UC

⁴⁹ Camping/Peak Experience engagement may include Day Camp participants, leaders, young leaders, Easter Madness participants, leaders, young leaders, facilitating own Holiday club or camp for children or youth, attending or hosting SU Australia or other Holiday club, camp or similar for children or youth, or young members of Synod in Session.

⁵⁰ At the time of interview, these churches were not yet engaged in camping ministry but were exploring and hoping to be soon.

⁵¹ Young people are in leadership roles in UCA churches in many ways including: supporting and leading worship in music, scripture, drama etc, leading in Youth & Children's ministries and camps, serving on Church Council, attending Presbytery or Synod in Session,

⁵² 1 church indicated 'not yet' and are working towards this for the future.

8. CHURCHES WITH MINISTERS, PASTORS AND WORKERS ENGAGING WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Churches with:	CYF Supportive	CYF Engaged	CYF Role	Not Supportive/None	Unknown
Minister/s	60 ⁵³	11 ⁵⁴	4 ⁵⁵	90	8
Pastor/s	11 ⁵⁶		14 ⁵⁷	134	13
Paid Workers (Youth, Children, Families)			8 ⁵⁸		
Paid Playgroup Workers/Coordinators			4 ⁵⁹		

9. MINISTERS, PASTORS AND STAFF IN CHURCHES

	Yes – 1 FTE +	Yes – Part Time	No	Unknown
Churches with Ordained Minister ⁶⁰	69	35	54	23
Churches with Paid employee (Pastor/worker/other) ⁶¹	16	20	121	23

10. VOLUNTEERS IN CHURCHES

	Yes – 1 FTE +	No	Unknown
Churches with Volunteers ⁶²	130	28	23
Churches with CYF volunteers ⁶³	99	-	83

⁵³ Ordained Minister/s indicated interest /leadership and support for Engaging with Younger generations

⁵⁴ Ordained Minister/s with training/experience/ capacity for engaging with younger generations, and actively working in this space

⁵⁵ Ordained Minister/s in a Younger Generations role

⁵⁶ Pastor/s indicated interest /leadership and support for Engaging with Younger generations

⁵⁷ Pastor/s in a paid Younger Generations role

⁵⁸ Paid worker in Younger Generations role

⁵⁹ Paid playgroup worker or coordinator

⁶⁰ Data from 2025 Annual Return – 158 responses, 23 non-responses

⁶¹ Data from 2025 Annual Return – 158 responses, 23 non-responses

⁶² Data from 2025 Annual Return – 158 responses, 23 non-responses

⁶³ Collected from research

8. CHURCHES WITH MINISTERS, PASTORS AND WORKERS ENGAGING WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

	Unknown	0	1-10	11-20	21-50	51-100	101-200	201-400	500+
Children (0-11years)	23	41	80	26	8	2	0	0	1
Confirmed members	23	28	5	12	44	43	19	6	1
Adherents	23	50	36	26	28	12	1	4	0
Av weekly worship	23	13	6	21	67	36	11	3	1

12. BAPTISM, THANKSGIVING AND CONFIRMATIONS DATA FROM ANNUAL RETURNS 2025

Churches with:	Unknown	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10+
Infant baptisms	85	31	16	11	5	4	4	1	1 ⁶⁴
Thanksgiving services	143	9	4	1	0				1 ⁶⁵
Confirmations	145	6	2	1	0	1	1		2 ⁶⁶
Adult baptisms	130	15	5	4					4 ⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Albert St Uniting Church = 18 infant Baptisms

⁶⁵ One congregation reported 52 Thanksgiving services, which we think is incorrectly reported. The usual definition is for Thanksgiving for the birth of a child, and this congregation reported only 4 children, and very little ministry with younger generations.

⁶⁶ Gatton UC = 10, Park Church = 38

⁶⁷ Newlife Robina = 46, Real Life = 10, Newlife Brisbane = 10, Brisbane Taiwanese = 11

13. STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED

Strengths/Opportunities identified	# of churches
Unknown	34
School relationship – RI/Chaplaincy/other	22
Health/strong CYF Ministries	18
Playgroup/Mainly Music	18
Inclusive/welcoming/collective culture	16
some /growing CYF ministry	16
Location close or next to school /Uni /UEL/ early learning / Community /Neighbourhood centre	15
Intergenerational community	11
Strong relationship/engagement with families	11
Committed Y&YA in leadership	8
Minister/pastors Experienced/passionate in CYF	8
Good facilities/ Building	7
Good/strong/skilled volunteers	7
CALD	3
Openness to starting new things	3
Mentoring /good leadership culture	3
Recent new growth	3
Grandparent figures	2
Finances/resources	2
C&Y on Council agenda	2
Music/worship style	2
Strong bond/relationships with young people	2
Family Integrated Church	1
LGBTQ affirming	1
Line dancing group	1
Messy church	1
Day Camp	1
High energy	1
Capacity to lead change well	1
YWAM connection	1

14. CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED

Strengths/Opportunities identified	# of churches
Lack of children	26
Lack of Youth	24
Unknown	23
Small/Ageing/tired congregation	23
Lack of /ageing volunteers	21
Traditional Music/worship style	12
Poor facilities/ space/ Building issues	10
Low engagement with/capacity for discipling YA	9
Lack of/lose YA	8
Lack of skilled volunteers	5
Lack of Finances/resources	5
Neurodiversity/ disability/ behavioural challenges	5
Unwilling to try new things/stuck in old ways	4
Limited/lack of leadership capacity	4
Safe Church Training	3
Recruiting and training volunteers	3
Commitments from Parents	3
Inconsistent/sporadic attendance	3
Competing with other/stronger churches	3
Lack of CYF Ministries	2
Engaging playgroup/ other families	2
Difficult School relationship	2
No minister	2
2nd Generation cultural gap	2
Relationship with presbytery	2
Lack of capacity for CYF	2

15. SUPPORTS AND TRAINING NEEDS AND WANTS IDENTIFIED

Supports/training needs/wants identified	# of churches
Unknown	72
Networking/ encouragement/Community of practice	12
Intergenerational training/coaching/support	12
Training – children and youth	11
Training – challenging behaviours and neurodiversity	10
Support for Vision/Mission/Strategy	11
Leading/mentoring young people	7
Training - Parenting for faith/grandparenting /supporting families	6
Sharing resources/ideas/stories	6
Training – Youth and Young adults	5
Training – discipleship and evangelism	5
Staff with specialist Children, Youth and Young Adult ministry skills	5
Training – Safe church	4
Funding/finances	4
Training – for Ministry Agent	4
YA training/gap year/intern/apprenticeship	4
Training - Vision/missional opportunity/being relevant	4
Sunday School resources	4
Training/Support for how to engage Y&C	5
Support for thinking outside the box/starting new things	4
Resourcing congregation – could support others	4
Need/find minister	3
Training – any	3
Training – working with volunteers	3
Support for events/programs	3
Combined Y&YA events/programs/camps	3
Training – accessible – time/location	2
Training – for church council	2
Connecting with Playgroup/other families	2

Supports/training needs/wants identified	# of churches
Worship resources	2
Support for Revival/growth of CYF	2
Training for Relational/incarnational/evangelistic ministry	2
Support for where to start	2
Leadership development for YA	2
CALD Y&YA support	2
Support and opportunities for regional Y&YA	2
Support for exploring Hub/parish church models	2
Training – pastoral care	1
Governance support	1
Bi-lingual resources	1
Evangelism training for youth	1
Support for playgroup	1
Help with the internet	1

Appendix **B**

APPENDIX B

Camps and Peak Experiences in Detail

BREMER BRISBANE DAY CAMP

4-day, camp coordinated by Jo Reynoldson and supported by the Presbytery Resourcing officer. Camp runs Tuesday - Friday for Primary school aged children at the Corinda Pony Club. Fusion is a Leadership development program within camp for grades 7 and 8. Leaders are made up of grade 9+ students, and volunteer adults from Bremer churches.

Jo Reynoldson is paid to coordinate the camp, including planning, preparation and onsite management of the program. Ministry Agents and lay leaders from local churches (adults and youth) facilitate the camp groups and activities. Bremer Churches support with planning activities: Community Life - Story Tent, Indooroopilly - Sport, Toowong - Craft, Oxley - Fire Cooking. Fusion has been planned by Russell Reynoldson & run by Holly Barnes (Chapel Hill) and Craig Batty (Ipswich). In those churches involved in Day Camp, usually the minister or pastor leads the coordinating of activity and is supported by volunteers.

STRENGTHS:

- Getting more churches involved in the last 2 years
- More Ministry agents are supporting and helping

CHALLENGES:

- Getting young leaders
- Ensuring all the logistics and legal and safety things are done
- Finance is a challenge for Jo and is supported by Presbytery team. May change sites in future - currently must set up and bring everything, including toilets and power to site. Looking to reduce the costs and set up.

SUPPORTS:

- Could do with support with legal, logistics and finances.
- Has reached out to MRP which has shared resources in the past.

Bremer Brisbane Day Camp	2024	2025
Children/Campers	37	49
Fusion	10	10
Young Leaders (small group & others)	6	10
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	20	24
One day helpers/visitors	6	6

BUNDABERG DAY CAMP

5-day, Day camp coordinated by Bundaberg Uniting Church. Camp runs Monday - Friday for Primary school aged children at the Wyper Park Scout Camp, Bundaberg. Campers catch buses from Bundaberg Uniting Church. From 2026, camp will be only 4 days Monday – Thursday to allow a rest day for volunteers after camp and will not include year 7's or 8's except for those that attend with parent helpers.

Alyce Sutton coordinates, with an experienced team of volunteers, supported by the Minister, Stuart Bosch. Adults and Youth Leaders run activities and small groups at camp. Many leaders come back from Brisbane for school holidays just to run camp.

STRENGTHS:

- The congregation. The people power required to make camp happen is huge, and with an ageing congregation, it is impressive how many continue to support and volunteer their time at the camp.
- There are also skilled leaders and teachers who rewrite programs to make it more relevant to the campers.
- The site is also a strength, with lots of space to spread out, and many undercover areas available. Abseiling Tower on site is used.

CHALLENGES:

- Cost and logistics.
- There are many activities that can't be run anymore, which isn't necessarily a bad thing because a lot of those activities came with a huge safety liability, but it does make it harder to come up with new ideas to keep campers entertained that are safe but still engaging.
- Cost wise, we are very blessed that we have people in our congregation who are very kind and generous to pay for the buses. But if we didn't have that, we would be having to fundraise or increase our prices which we are hesitant to do.

OPPORTUNITY:

- Coral Coast and nearby churches could get involved to spread the volunteer load and provide an opportunity for other children and families in the region to participate.

Bundaberg Day Camp	2024	2025
Children/Campers	109	104
Year 8 helpers	4	6
Young Leaders (small group & others)	16	15
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	55	51
One day helpers/visitors	8	10

CENTRAL BURNETT DAY CAMP

Central Burnett Day Camp is a 3-day camp, run during the first week of the Winter school holidays. Hosted on the Vickery property outside Mundubbera, by Ruth Vickery and Kathryn Wightman. It was started by Go West in 2009, where an experienced Day Camp team from the city, travelled to support local churches in rural areas to start their own Camps.

Campers and Leaders catch buses from local town churches of Gayndah, Eidsvold and Mundubbera. Leaders come from local Uniting, and Baptist churches, with some also coming from Brisbane. The local UC minister often supports, and recently the local Baptist pastor has been supporting and leading the camp. Some campers attend local Uniting and Baptist churches, but most campers do not attend church at all. The camp offers a true bush camp experience, with gunyahs built in and along the dry creek, and activities including archery, shanghai range, bush obstacle course, campfire damper, billy tea, crafts, and long drop toilets built by local men. The program includes worship each morning and afternoon, with devotions every day.

STRENGTHS:

- Years of experience, what we do works and has been proven year after year. Big believers in keeping it simple
- Most leaders are locally grown - come back as leaders after growing up in Day Camp.

CHALLENGES:

- Getting adequate volunteers and leaders for ratios.

SUPPORTS NEEDED:

- Behind the scenes and volunteer management including guidance on how to navigate BlueCard system, keeping records, streamlining recruitment, training etc.
- Recruitment of leaders - try to get as many local as possible, but with small and ageing congregations in the region this is becoming more difficult.

OPPORTUNITY:

- Possible opportunity to start a fresh expression church /messy church/ family church with the leaders and participants from Day Camp. Need support from ministry agent and volunteers to get it off the ground.

Central Burnett Day Camp	2024	2025
Children/Campers ⁶⁸	77	71
Year 8 helpers	2	3
Young Leaders (U18)	9	10
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	28	29
One day helpers/visitors	2	4

⁶⁸ Year 7 are still campers at this stage and looking at if or how to transition to a Prep-Year 6 program in line with most other Day Camps.

REDLANDS DAY CAMP

Redlands Day Camp has been led by Rev Beth Nicholls and volunteers from Redlands Uniting Church congregations across Capalaba, Wellington Point, Cleveland, Victoria Point and Redland Bay. The coordinator receives a one month stipend to support year round planning.

Leaders come from past Day Camp participants, including many whose only church contact is through the program. Small group leaders include Year 9–12 students, adults, site volunteers, and Year 8 Apprentice/Leaders in Training (LIT).

In 2025, Living Water UC explored a partnership due to long time Day Camp connections through Ian Gilmore. Though it did not proceed, Sandra Winslade joined to support Ian’s family.

Redlands Church Council has decided not to run Day Camp in 2026.

STRENGTHS:

- 49 years of day camp in 2025
- Longevity and relationships built over many years

CHALLENGES:

- Recruiting volunteers
- Resources and curriculum ideas - only one volunteer organises curriculum.

Redlands Day Camp	2024	2025
Children/Campers	61	64
Year 8 LIT’s (Leaders in training)	9	11
Young Leaders (U18)	8	6
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	25	25
One day helpers/visitors	26	25

MORETON RIVERS DAY CAMP - SAMFORD

Samford Day Camp is a 4-day camp, now held at the Samford Valley Community Church during the second week of the Winter school holidays⁶⁹. This Moreton Rivers Presbytery Camp is coordinated by Milly MacPherson, supported by Fernando Torres (Presbytery Y&YA Coordinator) and a team of local leaders.

Campers and Leaders catch buses from local churches of the Gap, Enoggera, Aspley and Chermside or meet onsite at the church each day for worship, small group time, devotions, craft, cooking, campfire and adventure activities like rock climbing and bungee trampolining.

The Camp is for Prep – Year 6 as campers, with a Fusion leadership development program being run for Year 7 and 8 participants as part of the camp. During the week, they learn about leadership, and have opportunities to be leaders, planning, preparing and running activities with support from other leaders. After participating in this program, they are ready and more equipped to be small group, or other activity leaders from Year 9 onwards.

In 2025, three teenagers stepped into director roles, and led the Fusion, Craft and Cooking activities. Ministry agents and lay volunteers from across the presbytery including Enoggera, Chermside, The Gap, Faith Works, Park Church and Bracken Ridge support as leaders and helpers.

STRENGTHS:

- Authentically inclusive, with behaviour support and leadership development built into the program
- Young leaders are taking on larger roles

CHALLENGES:

- Smaller numbers of specialised ministry agents in churches reduces the number of directors and volunteers supporting day camp

OPPORTUNITY:

- More churches from the presbytery could participate, with buses running from other locations as required.

Samford Day Camp	2024	2025
Children/Campers	49	47
Fusion	13	9
Young Leaders (small group & others)	15	18
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	7	13
One day helpers/visitors	8	25

⁶⁹ Samford Day Camp was previously held at a property in Cedar Creek owned by Uniting Church families and moved when it was sold.

MORETON RIVERS DAY CAMP - PINE RIVERS

Pine Rivers Day Camp started in 2018 as a second camp in a northern location for Moreton Rivers Presbytery due to the growing numbers of campers and leaders travelling from Redcliffe and Caboolture, the long distances they were travelling, and reaching capacity at the Cedar Creek Campsite for the existing Presbytery Day Camp.

Held at the Pine Rivers Uniting Church during the first week of the Winter school holidays, this presbytery organised 4-day camp is also coordinated by Milly MacPherson, supported by Fernando Torres and a team of local leaders, running the same program as the Samford Day Camp, with ministry agents and volunteers from Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Caboolture churches. In the past, the two Moreton Rivers camps have run in the same week and recently moved to separate weeks to facilitate better management. Campers and Leaders meet onsite at the church each day for worship, small group time, devotions, craft, cooking, campfire and adventure activities (like rock climbing, archery, inflatable obstacle course).

STRENGTHS:

- Great facility at Pine Rivers
- Good team of committed leaders from local churches.

CHALLENGES:

- Getting adequate volunteers and leaders for ratios
- Encouraging more churches across the presbytery to be involved
- Most volunteers come from Redcliffe, Pine Rivers and Caboolture UC.

OPPORTUNITY:

- Other churches in the region could also participate.

Pine Rivers Day Camp	2024	2025
Children/Campers	61	50
Fusion	12	14
Young Leaders (small group & others)	8	11
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	15	13
One day helpers/visitors	8	14

EASTER MADNESS – YOUTH CAMP

Easter Madness is a camp for high school students that has been impacting, discipling, and leaving indelible marks of God's love in the lives of hundreds of young people for many years. Easter Madness it is held at Alexandra Park Conference centre, at a 50% site discount supported by the Qld Synod and is coordinated by a team from Moreton Rivers Presbytery including the Y&C Ministry Coordinator, a paid camp coordinator, a Lay director and Ministry agents from local congregations.

In recent years, it has seen greater engagement from across QLD with leaders and campers coming from all parts of the state. Although geared towards youth, there is a large participation of young adults who come to serve as leaders.

The goal of Easter Madness is to provide an environment where young people are welcomed, encouraged and can sing, dance, talk, praise, pray, have fun, play games, make friends, open their hearts in small groups, visit the beach,

and participate in elective activities of faith and fun. In this context, one of the highlights is the engaging and energetic worship with a more contemporary approach, where voices come together like a chorus of love.

STRENGTHS:

- The great number of young people, and young adult leaders that attend
- Great speakers and worship and renewed focus on discipleship

CHALLENGES:

- The wide cultural, theological, and social diversity of the campers brings behavioural challenges.
- Travel distance and cost for those coming from rural and regional areas

OPPORTUNITY:

- With the right site and support, a second camp could be hosted at another site in a northern or regional part of the state

Easter Madness	2024	2025	2026
Campers	122	131	118
Adult Leaders (small group & others)	58	72	53
One day helpers/visitors	1	9	10
Accommodated on site	180	203	171

BADEYA – YOUTH CAMPS

BaDeYa is a Youth Weekend Camp for high schoolers run by Moreton Rivers Presbytery. It was Traditionally run in September⁷⁰, and now happens in other locations at other times of the year.

Recently it's focus has become equipping and encouraging youth to prepare and lead worship in the host church, while also engaging in fun activities including hiking, canoeing, city scavenger hunts, beach trips, and campfires. It supports churches by bringing together smaller youth groups, providing a peak experience that could not be facilitated by any of the participating churches by themselves.

STRENGTHS:

- Provides opportunities for building relationships across churches
- Provides opportunity for youth to experience, prepare and lead worship different to that of their home congregation
- Host church experiences worship in different style than what they may ordinarily

CHALLENGES:

- Finding host churches with suitable facilities for overnight stays
- Finding suitable leaders to plan and facilitate camps, without over working those who are already stretched running their own ministries

OPPORTUNITY:

- BaDeYa could be taken to regional and rural locations to build relationship and support these ministries
- Worship could be streamed to other churches

BaDeYa	September 2024	February 2025	September 2025
Campers	23	17	21
Leaders/helpers	12	13	9

⁷⁰ BaDeYa takes its name from the Earth, Wind and Fire Song September

AXIOS – YOUNG ADULTS

Axios was created in the latter half of 2025, by a group of six leaders from different Uniting Church Qld teams/communities, supported by Moreton Rivers Presbytery and the Synod's Mission Accompanying Team (MAT), all with a passion to bring together young adults from across Brisbane.

A worship night (called Praise Revival) was the first event, with worship led by some of our young people, a shared meal, facilitated conversation, and worship together as a wider community of young people. Over 70 people from more than 10 church communities participated.

In January 2026, Axios hosted its first 3-day camp. More than 50 people attended, with three amazing speakers, and camped at on a Uniting Church property in Samford. To accommodate and provide the camp with as many people as possible, we ensured that we had enabled full weekend registration (all three days) as well as day visitor passes. It was so amazing to see God moving in that space and see our young people step into leadership roles.

Axios plans to have ongoing events every 6 weeks through 2026. The calendar and ongoing social media presence can be found at [instagram.com/axiosqld/](https://www.instagram.com/axiosqld/)

STRENGTHS:

- Great attendance at events, especially by churches with only a few young adults
- A space where young adults can invite their non-Christian friends

CHALLENGES:

- Cross- Presbytery leadership
- Finding leaders to do all the things required

OPPORTUNITY:

- Events could be facilitated in other rural and remote locations with worship live streamed for those locations.

APPENDIX C

Benchmarking against other Synods

At the May 2026 meeting of the UCA National Youth and Children's Coalition, these updates from each state were shared.

NSW/ACT SYNOD

- Agreed to two next gen workers in each of the 3 presbyteries going forward at 2025 Synod.
- Kids Camp Out
- Uniting Youth Camp
- Retreat Yourself (YA camp)
- Schools' engagement and student leadership days
- Growing Young consultations
nswact.uca.org.au/resources/growing-young/
- Curriculum resources
nswact.uca.org.au/resources/who-do-you-say-i-am/
nswact.uca.org.au/resources/big-lessons-and-bigger-questions/
- Pulse Leaders Gathering for those in leadership of ministry with young people.
- Leadership workshops and ministry cohorts
- Renew – YA POD program
renew.uca.org.au
- Jindabyne YA 'Missional' Trip
- Leaders seem tired right now/highly fatigued
- More open positions than experienced people to fill them

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SYNOD

- Amplify Conference – host and support local hubs
- Leaders to go conference 2025 support planning team
- Messy Church – connecting with local leaders in children and families ministry
- Intergenerate Australia/NZ Conference –Adelaide hub in 2024 and 2026
- Emerging Leaders Retreat (previously Youth Pastors Retreat) - Annual retreat gathering youth and other emerging leaders across the SA Synod for spiritual formation, practical ministry training, and community building
- State Youth Conference or Worship Nights for young people in Years 7–12
- Youth Development Team - practitioner-led group of youth leaders from across the Synod, united by shared passion with a dual mandate of raising the discipleship bar and fostering unity across youth ministries.
- Informal network and gathering of young adults' leaders from CALD communities across SA.

VIC/TAS SYNOD

- Youth Rally's around state, gathering 200+ people
- Multicultural Leaders Retreat
- School of Discipleship
- Training and Resources
- Healthy neurodiverse inclusive communities.
- All-age creative worship across Congregations and Presbyteries
- Safe Church Training for Multicultural leaders and communities
- Messy Church Training
- Digital Safety – Training, Resources and Policies.
- Digital Discipleship and Mission Training
- Intergeren – writing resources and connecting with Bubble Church/Sensory Tray books
- Messy Church Australia
- PAELS (Pacific Australian Emerging Leaders Network)
- Converge Oceania
- Significant effort in growing understanding of the church's role in spiritual formation beyond 'typical' church events, i.e., art engagement, gaming events, and conventions, and being attentive and intentional to meaning-making taking place and forming communities in these spaces.

NORTHERN SYNOD

- Congregations are working hard to invest in youth and children's ministries with limited resources.
- Nightcliff, Living Water and Alice Springs experience vitality in intergenerational ministry and children's ministry.
- Children and youth ministry happening in congregational communities in all four regions of Pilgrim Presbytery.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA SYNOD

- Ecumenical Children's Prayer event with children and parents
- Team of young people attending Alpha Conference and doing mission work in Malaysia.
- Intergenerational Church and Developing children's or youth programs workshops for congregations
- Presbytery worship using intergenerational practices.
- Uniting Church team at State Youth Games used Hope Group Bible study materials
- One of the most liturgically traditional congregations, slowly moving towards community engagement with younger generations.
- Other congregations committed to regularly running intergenerational services, have teenagers leading worship and monthly café church using intergenerational practices.
- Lay Preacher training session on moving the children's message to an intergenerational message.
- New grant scheme for churches wishing to establish fresh expressions, church plants etc.

Appendix D

APPENDIX D

Definitions and Terms used in this document

Throughout this document we have opted to use the broadest meaning of several terms. For clarity and convenience, the terms and the meaning ascribed to them within this document are:

MINISTRY AGENTS

A term encompassing Ministers of the Word, Deacons, and Pastors serving in ministry placements within Queensland

MOW

Minister of the Word (includes Deacons)

MOP

Ministry of Pastor (includes Pastors in location)

MUTH ARRAK/ UAICC

Muth Arrak is the Queensland regional committee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

CYF

Children, Youth and Families – a general term used for ministries engaging with younger generations

CHILD/CHILDREN

Aged 0-12, primary school age and under

YOUTH

Aged 13-17, high school age

YOUNG ADULT/ YA

Aged 18-25 (35 in some cultures), post school aged, legally adults

YOUNG PEOPLE/YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Ages 0-30⁷¹

Y&YA

Youth and Young Adult - including both age groups

MONO-GENERATIONAL

One generation present or engaged

FAMILIES' MINISTRY

Includes families of all types

⁷¹ The United Nations defines "youth" as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, though "young people" can sometimes broadly include the 10–24 age bracket.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "adolescents" as those aged 10–19, and "youth" as 15–24, with "young people" combining these groups to cover the 10–24 age range.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) broadly categorizes young people as individuals aged 12–24, acknowledging this life stage as a critical transition toward independence.

AGE-SEGREGATED/SEPARATED

Separation based on age or ability

MULTI-GENERATIONAL

Two or more generations present where there is tolerance, living alongside and superficial and polite interaction

CROSS-GENERATIONAL

Two or more generations present engaged in some sharing, listening, learning with little individual/collective transformation.

INTERGENERATIONAL

Two or more different age groups... together learning, growing, living in faith through in common experiences, parallel learning, contributive occasions, and interactive sharing.”⁷²

MINISTRY WITH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Ministry by the whole of God's Community with young people from birth into adulthood - drawing them deeper into God's Kingdom, in family, intergenerational and community spaces, where a life-long growing faith is disciplined, in a whole-of-being way.

CALD

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (from the dominant (English) culture). Often used as a general catch all phrase to encompass multi-, cross- and inter-cultural communities.

MONO-CULTURAL

A group with a single ethnicity, or one very dominant ethnicity.

Multi-cultural: A group that contains several ethnic groups. People live alongside one another, but each ethnic group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with one other.

CROSS-CULTURAL

A group that contains multiple ethnicities with a growing level of cooperation, partnership, and interaction.

INTER-CULTURAL

A group in which there is a deep understanding, interaction and respect for each culture that is part of the whole, which is reflected in decision making and leadership.⁷³

DISCIPLE

A person who seeks to know and live the way of Jesus and, in community, help others do the same for the restoration of all things to God.

DISCIPLESHIP

the communal work of those who know and live the way of Jesus, supporting each other in this way of living as they grow and work together with God in the restoration of all things.

DISCIPLESHIP FRAMEWORK

Discipleship elements that support and nurture formational experiences for lifelong faith. When embedded in the local faith community, these elements support communities to create deeply nurturing environments for life-long discipleship.

- God's Big Story
- Encounters with Jesus
- Peak experiences
- Coaching and Mentoring
- Rites of Passage
- Family Household Nurture
- Intergenerational Connections
- Positive Peer Community
- Serving in Mission
- Respond with Compassion

⁷² James W. White, *Intergenerational Religious Education: Models, Theories and Prescription for Interage Life and Learning in the Faith Community* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988), p.18

⁷³ springinstitute.org/whats-difference-multicultural-intercultural-cross-cultural-communication/

Appendix **E**

APPENDIX E

Other Reports on Engaging Younger Generations

YOUR STORY

convergeoceania.com/yourstory

GEN ALPHA INSIGHTS ON THE NEXT GENERATION

resources.onehope.net/genalphausa/p/1

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT GEN Z

feed.bible/research/

STUDENT FLOURISHING IN AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

csa.edu.au/CSA/CSA/Our-Services/CSA-Research/Student-Flourishing.aspx







The Uniting Church in Australia
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