

Shared life, flourishing communities

PROGRESS REPORT



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Walking together
October 2023

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We are *one* church

We are one church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community.



To all friends of the Uniting Church in Queensland,

It is now three years since we stepped into **Project Plenty** together and began our journey towards the ambition of a *shared life and flourishing communities*. Plenty is, at its core, a bold commitment to culture change for the whole Uniting Church in Queensland. It seeks to give us a collective, strategic intent and shared opportunities for new things as we face the future together. Our church is very large and broad, and so the process may at times feel slow, however I am pleased to share some of the wide-ranging achievements and changes accomplished by people across the Synod in the last 18 months and give you insight into them through this progress report.

As you know our ambition is ...*to be one church, active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community.*

We remain committed to the plentiful program of work, because it provides us with a helpful framework for understanding our collective mission and the contribution that each area of our broad church can make in realising our ambition. It also helps us to focus on the four key **Mission Priority** areas, that we have discerned as a church are the areas that we most need to grow and develop in. Most importantly though, Plenty gives us a mandate and platform from which we can ask the most searching and difficult questions that the Uniting Church in Queensland needs to address, in order to move forward and see the church flourish and be renewed.

I am nearing the end of my personal leadership of this project, and yet I remain more encouraged than ever about the impact and potential change that this work is creating for the future of the Uniting Church in Queensland. As you read the following pages, I hope you are inspired to discern how you can both benefit from, and contribute to, our plentiful ambition of living a shared life in flourishing communities.



Trusting God for what is to come.

Rev Heather den Houting

On behalf of the Plenty Board.

Introduction



In the last progress report, we presented over 115 initiatives and actions that had been described by the 11 working groups. When looking at the work as a whole, we realised that each of the groups had suggested similar types of work that we should step into, and that the majority of the actions fit into six common categories.

Each of the groups realised the need to:

- **Affirm common ground** – shared ethos, policy, position statements
- **Realign responsibilities and resources** – governance groups, committees, staffing
- **Create cross-synod networks** – communities of practice, forums, working groups, key partnerships
- **Build the capacity of our people** – coaching, mentoring, training, educating
- **Develop and deliver enablers** – tools, guidelines, programs, projects, events
- **Share resources and information** – platforms, content, communication, promotion

In this progress report we will present what has been achieved in relation to the categories above and give insight into what the next steps forward might be. We will also share some insightful and inspiring stories, in words spoken by those who have boldly stepped into plentiful work in their own place and context.



Steps Taken



Affirm common ground

A key feature of the Plenty Project has been to take a 'whole of church view' when thinking about these important themes. In almost all the Mission Priority areas, the working groups found that whilst there was already excellent work taking place, it was not always being done in a co-ordinated or aligned way across the different councils and agencies of the church. It became apparent that in many areas we simply did not have the shared clarity, ethos, or position on issues that would allow us to effectively rally together and leverage our efforts.

70 working group members
from presbyteries, agencies, schools and colleges

In response to this challenge, the Plenty working groups have collaborated with, supported and championed people across the Synod to:

- Develop *A Flourishing Creation: Queensland Synod Action and Advocacy Plan* which offers a variety of environmental sustainability pathways and options and gained endorsement at the 36th Synod in Session.
- Deliver the *Governance Research Brief Report* which captures an overview of existing governance models, to support upcoming discussion and decisions around incorporation and restructuring. (This will also assist with Act 2 discussions currently underway at Assembly).
- Adopt a 'Life-long Discipleship Framework' which provides a common language for how congregations can build a culture of discipleship. This framework outlines 10 key areas that are important in nurturing the faith of people from early childhood all the way through to older adults.
- Draft a church planting and innovation framework to help Presbyteries understand how to foster new initiatives within our existing systems and polity.



- Draft a *Queensland Synod Advocacy Framework* to assist in addressing social justice issues.
- Develop position statements and communication strategies for the following issues – Voluntary Assisted Dying, Raise the Age, Voice to Parliament.
- Host the *Life Together Narrative Workshop* to create contemporary ways to tell the Uniting Church in Queensland history, vision, mission, and values and share them across the life of the church.

Realign responsibilities and resources



One of the important pieces of work over the last 18 months has been to examine whether each of the commitment areas has adequate resourcing and support to do the necessary work. In several cases, it was found that the church council or agency that had the regulated charter to deliver on a particular theme, was in fact limited in their effectiveness due to lack of staff support or duplication of effort across the church.

To address this need:

- The *Queensland Synod Resourcing Review (QSRR)* was initiated to explore potential funding solutions for both Synod and Presbyteries.
- Delivery of the 11 Plenty commitment areas being aligned to existing councils, boards, and committees of the church.
- The Queensland regional leadership council of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) was re-established.
- Provision was made for an Executive Officer for the Board for Christian Formation (BCF) to progress the upskilling identified by all 11 commitment areas.
- The Environment and Sustainability Project Officer initiated the necessary engagement to implement the Flourishing Creation plan outlined above.
- The pilot of the cross-agency and Uniting Church Wellbeing and Mental Health initiative was supported by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Project Officer.
- Provision was made for a Covenanting/RAP Project Officer to create a 'whole of Synod approach' to reconciliation initiatives.



Steps Taken (cont.)



Create cross-Synod networks

Networking is the foundation of all innovation, and each of the groups has worked hard to develop connections, forums, and communities of practice that people from right across the church can contribute to and benefit from. This connecting activity is at the very heart of the work of the Uniting Church and has been a critical component of our commitment to doing Life Together. We are seeking to provide opportunities where like-minded people from across the church can 'find their tribe'.

Over the last 18 months our Plenty working groups have collaborated to:

- Host monthly prayer meetings online to pray for 'Renewal' within the Uniting Church.
- Facilitate the Discipleship Culture Network (webpage and social media).
- Facilitate an Environmental Sustainability Community of Practice.
- Facilitate an Intergenerational Ministry Network for ministry with children, youth, young adults, and families (CYYAF) (webpage and social media).
- Host state-wide covenanting gatherings in Cairns and Townsville.



Build the capacity of our people

We have spent considerable time and effort on providing opportunities for the training and upskilling of our people. We have both initiated opportunities and supported the work of others across the church. In many cases we have been able to use our own internal Uniting Church people for coaching, mentoring, and training however we have also connected people with external training opportunities.

Plentiful Mentoring Leadership Program
40+ new leaders engaged this year
100+ leaders to date

Plenty has engaged with and invested in a wide range activities. It has:

- Facilitated the *Plentiful Mentoring Leadership Program* (PMLP) for a second time.
- Supported *Building a Discipleship Culture* event (Moreton Rivers).
- Supported *Congregation Mission in a Post-Christian Age* workshop (South Moreton).
- Supported *Here2Stay* training in lifelong discipleship (Moreton Rivers).
- Supported *Easter Madness* and Day Camps to assist Presbyteries in developing young leaders and disciples.
- Sponsored Uniting Church delegates to attend CYYAF training through *Amplify*, *InterGenerate* and *Leaders2Go* conferences.
- Sponsored delegates from congregations and the Office of the Synod to attend *Exponential Church Planting* conferences.
- Sponsored Uniting Church participants in the *Mission Leadership Hub* in partnership with NSW Synod.
- Developed *Friendly Spaces* training program in Mental Health First Aid and Domestic Violence support for church-based volunteers.

'Here 2 Stay' training
25 participants
10 congregations

- Hosted monthly online book clubs in the areas of discipleship and inter-generational ministry.

Steps Taken (cont.)



Develop and deliver enablers



Several tools, guidelines, programs, and events have been shared to support work on the ground. In most cases we have tried to use the great resources that already exist in the wider church however, the list below are things that the Plenty working groups believed were important to create specifically for use in our context.

Engaging and collaborating widely we have:

- Developed a *Discipleship Primer and Discipleship Strategy Tools*.
- Initiated 'Friendly Spaces', a Wellbeing and Mental Health pilot on the Gold Coast to explore how local congregation volunteers can better support people experiencing issues of mental health, domestic violence, and social isolation, within the capacity and community of the church, referring onward to professional help as needed.
- Produced *Uniting Church Leadership Practices* modules for use across the Synod which will be incorporated into the next version of the Plentiful Mentoring Leadership Program (PMLP).
- Worked with The Business Committee for the 37th Synod to develop a *Wayfinder Yarning Guide* for including 'yarning circles' into the discernment process at Synod in Session.



+150
participants at Mission & Discipleship events from all Presbyteries



Share resources and information

From the beginning, part of the work of Plenty has been a commitment to sharing the stories and messages of the work of the life of the church to others within the UCAQ family. In some cases, we have built new platforms and content to promote events and engage people. In other cases, we have tried to serve as a conduit in sharing the extraordinary work of others, with a view to ensuring that many voices and perspectives are heard.

Since the last Synod in Session the working groups have engaged with others across the Synod to:

- Produce children's ministry and *Intergenerational Worship Resources* for Advent and Lent. Over 100 congregations involved for each event and over 500 downloads of the material.
- Create and host the *Voices of Our Covenant* story telling project and exhibition to collect and share First Peoples stories of faith and culture.
- Host the *Uniting for the Voice* livestreamed event in the lead up to the referendum.
- Join Queensland Conservation Council's Cost of Living Climate Coalition and endorse the *Power Together* campaign which advocates for increased investment by the QLD Government in renewable energy for vulnerable communities.

Lent and Advent Intergenerational Worship Resources
+100 congregations involved
+500 downloads



Reimagining Discipleship

Core business and personal journey – in conversation with Rev Mark Cornford.



Discipleship was named as a Project Plenty priority and our Presbytery review as part of that also identified that it was also the central part of our strategic vision. We realized that we needed to focus on encouraging, helping, supporting, and resourcing discipleship.

The whole foundation, the core business of the church is about forming disciples in the mission of God. So that's fundamental. If it's not the clear priority, then we need to help reframe people's understanding of who we are and what we do, how we organise events or run a worship service so that we are intentionally forming people into following Jesus for the sake of the mission of God.

There have been a number of different things that have come from that emphasis. In our reimagine process we've identified the congregations that are likely to face real challenges in the next three to five years, and to

focus our support there. We have run a variety of workshops on discipleship and mission with church council Chairs, individual congregations, as a Presbytery, and reaching out into the wider church, including the Discipleship Day at the beginning of the year and the recent Here2Stay workshop.

We are connecting with people and exploring a common language and common ideas and working to encourage and resource others to walk with us.

At the recent workshop there were over 80 people in the room, and seven online hubs with groups participating across the Synod. That highlights that it was certainly something that people wanted and were passionate about. As we ask ourselves about discipleship culture, I have had feedback from ministers who say – *"We were never really trained in this."* This work

is transformational rather than just strategic or operational and it gets to the core ethos and purpose of how we understand our roles.

It's also not about adding on another program, not 'doing discipleship' on top of all the other things. It's about fundamentally looking at your understanding of who you are and what you're trying to do. It doesn't mean you'll stop doing worship or pastoral care, but it's an understanding of worship or pastoral care as part of something else, as part of finding the way of Jesus for the sacred mission of God.

As a presbytery, we have been discussing that discipleship involves three things - **experiencing the kingdom of God, living the kingdom of God and inviting other people into the kingdom of God.**

It's not a checklist but a space in which we live. A disciple is someone who experiences and knows the truth of the gospel. A disciple is someone who then seeks to live that out in terms of their actions, and how they interact with others and live in community. And thirdly, a disciple is someone who invites other people into that journey.

It doesn't matter where you start or how you start, right from whenever someone says I'm a follower, this is the journey you're on. As you travel, you'll face challenges and grow in understanding, but the journey is the same.

It was powerful for us that this was named as the number one Plenty priority across the whole church, to know that we see the same thing

and that this is actually the story of the church in Queensland. We're not just off on our own little journey, we're a part of an ongoing journey of the whole church. Plenty was a vision that gave us permission to say, "actually you know what? This is a real priority, and we are going to step into this intentionally. Without the plentiful conversations around us, it is likely we would have just run these workshops for our own Presbytery and worked with our people, in our place. The advantage of being connected to Plenty is we are able to ask the wider questions - how can we turn this into a bigger thing and

Plenty was a vision that gave us permission to say, "actually you know what? This is a real priority, and we are going to step into this intentionally."

are there other things that other people are doing that we can connect into? It's been about collaborating on the journey, sharing and receiving, and agreeing together that discipleship is the core

thing, and it has to be at the center.

Many people from congregations have made that leap - saying, "Yes, we want to do this, we want to be on board." They want to be connected in and empowered. There are church councils who feel challenged by this call to transform, and that has to be the next step for us going forward. This is a real change, a massive journey with many different paths and it's quite messy, but it is a journey that I'm convinced is necessary, that I believe we are called onto.

We are basically empowering people to take responsibility for the mission of God themselves and as they do that, who knows what will happen?



Changing the shape of the future



The original consultation for Project Plenty sought for the whole church to identify what areas we were doing well and what areas we needed to improve or do more of. This resulted in us settling on the **four Mission Priority Areas of Discipleship, Transforming Communities, Fit for Purpose, and Life Together**. These were then further clarified into 11 commitments which ranged from Youth and Children's Ministry to Leadership Development, to Governance Reform.

These topics were not new, or unique to the Uniting Church in Queensland, however they were deeply true to our mission, and they represented, in a sense, areas of deficiency or 'gaps' that the church thought were not as healthy or vibrant as we wanted them to be. It is worth noting that every one of these areas already have a place within the Uniting Church in Queensland, and that there are indeed regulated councils, groups, boards, or agencies that have a charter or mandate to deliver against these Mission Priority Areas. These groups already have responsibility for these areas and

yet only the Synod Standing Committee has had an overall view of how all the pieces fit together. The opportunity of Project Plenty has been that it has allowed us to step back and take a global and integrated view regarding how to address these gaps as **ONE interconiliar church**.

The reality that has become apparent, is that whilst we have had the corporate infrastructure and polity to deliver on all the commitment

areas raised in Plenty, the actual work of each of these areas was not flourishing as we would wish it to be. In several cases this was because the boards and committees themselves had become burdened with issues that were not directly related to their charter and in other cases there has not been sufficient staff provided to support these largely volunteer groups.

Prior to the 36th Synod in Session, the staff working on Project Plenty assembled

working groups for each of the commitment areas with representative membership from across the breadth of the Synod and asked them

to develop a set of initiatives and actions that could guide the way forwards. Since that time, we have been in an implementation phase, where many of these initiatives and actions have been forwarded by the working groups themselves or by staff within the Office of the Synod, in collaboration with others across the Synod.

As this project matures, it becomes clear that we are now in danger of duplicating our efforts by trying to address these Mission Priority areas both through the existing councils, boards and committees, (who have the charter and mandate but relatively few time and people resources), and through Project Plenty (which has time and resources but no real structural mandate to undertake this work on behalf of the church). In some cases, there has been good collaboration between these groups however at other times it has been a source of stagnation and frustration.

All of this is important to understand in terms of the future of this vital Plentiful work within the life of the church. In particular, we need to address how the focus on Discipleship, Transforming Communities, being Fit for Purpose and living a flourishing Life Together can best continue and strengthen.

For the next season, each of the Mission Priority Areas will remain, but the emphasis will be on supporting the existing councils, boards, and committees to better function as the governing and steering groups for these key areas. We will

do this ensuring that the working groups, Office of the Synod staff, and budget support are better aligned to deliver on the initiatives and actions, under the direction and oversight of the relevant boards and councils. In simple terms, over time the boards and councils will govern and shape these areas, the plenty working groups will provide on the ground feedback and advice as active practitioners in each area, and Office of the Synod staff will facilitate the process, provide subject matter expertise, and ensure that progress is being made.

It should be noted that the primary goal remains to assist the whole church to grow in the four key priority areas and that the structural changes above are intended to support and enable each congregation, presbytery, organisation, entity and agency to do the plentiful work that they discern is right for them, as they work with the boards, committees, and councils of the church in Queensland.



The emphasis will be on supporting the existing councils, boards, and committees to better function as the governing and steering groups for these key areas.



Plentiful journeys at The Lakes College

Why not? What if? And a lot of hard work – in conversation with Principal Nicole Gregory



How it started

Three years ago our Board Chair encouraged the Board to look at how we could engage with what was being offered through Plenty, oriented towards sharing and leveraging community and what community has to offer. We worked strategically, developing understanding, particularly of discipleship and reflecting on how fit for purpose we were. We engaged with these ideas and the Mission Engagement Manager who workshopped with us. As an executive and Board, we did some particularly deep reflection in that discipleship space and that became our

first connection point in terms of Plenty and Flourishing Communities.

We committed to intentionally connecting to the wider church and the other UC schools – this helped me to consider who are my people and what does this organisation called the Uniting Church really look like, and what are some of the areas of the church that we could intersect with? That was the foundational piece of thinking.

We thought, “Why wouldn't we do this? Let's give it a go.”

What resonated for us?

We are dealing with a generation of young people coming through our schools, who have been impacted by the pandemic and all that has meant, who feel that their life is fairly challenging in terms of their view of future. What has become increasingly obvious is that when our students leave here, we need some stable connection points for them as they navigate life outside of school.

Deep in my heart is the thought that if we can develop some partnerships with the wider

church, if the young people know they belong to something bigger and greater than just The Lakes College, that might be the safety net they need. Perhaps they can turn to that at any point in their life - for personal support,

to be part of community, to look for work, and to know that when you leave our gates, there is a world out there and there are people in that world that care for you.

They care about the same things because the value alignment is there. Our values at the Lakes College are the Uniting Church values.

There is also the sense of rationalism when you think about these partnerships and connections too. If there are things already in existence - why would you reinvent the wheel? We don't need to replicate what we are doing in our different contexts, when actually there's already unifying factors that exist.

There are more ideas and opportunities evolving because people have been given the opportunity to engage, the permission to engage.

Discipleship journeys

We understood at The Lakes, that there was a deep need for us to begin to look at formation of both staff and young people. We are working to ensure that formation is a key part of staff commencement and continues throughout their journey in the organisation. It's really important for our staff to understand that when you engage as an educator or a support person in a Uniting Church school, it means something more than just a job.

We have also looked at the way we do faith and values education here, to create a more contemporary view of how we engage with young people and the spiritual connection and understanding of faith and religion as a part of the whole formation piece. That led us into conversation with Trinity Theological College – we are working on the concept of service-learning for young people as part of formation, looking at what service-learning looks like from prep through to year 12 and how we can embed that in our pedagogical culture.

It's also led us into conversations with one of the sister schools, Calvary, around how they do service. There's a shared body of knowledge that is helping us. We are asking what it means to serve, and what are some opportunities where our students and our staff can engage with other entities in the church in a sustainable, tangible way on a regular basis. We have brought in a new Director of Mission and changed the focus from a chaplain to a director of mission which has created a space for partnership building. We're at the point now where we've almost finished our framework for service learning, and we're starting to look at the outpouring of what that will look like. That'll be a bit of a journey for us.





Intergenerational life together opportunities

We have engaged with two of our local congregations. We have connected to the North Lakes UCA community, and we have really enjoyed having some of the congregation members come and participate in events and activities on the college site - simple things like standing at the gate and handing out pancakes. You can see the joy when members of the congregation who are retired get to come and actually engage in that way. It is life together and intergenerational engagement and it is a really intentional piece for us. It seems like a small thing, but it's actually a really big partnership piece.

We're also engaging with Redcliffe Uniting Church to look at ways to set up a youth group. We are part of the Moreton Rivers Presbytery's conversation around youth and youth activities, and offered our space to host a gathering with local congregation members and young people to talk about what a youth group could look like. And the Lakes College has said, "Hey, we've got 1,100 students in our school who all live in this local area. If you want to come and set up a youth group here, we'll just give you the space to help you do that." The aim is to have a functioning youth group here, at least by the commencement of next year which is likely to be run by the church at Redcliffe because they have the resources and expertise. This is part of a bigger conversation about developing youth hubs, connecting smaller youth groups in a broader networking community.

Our Culinary Club has now catered several events for people in the wider church, either traveling to other venues or like the Moreton Rivers Presbytery meeting, which

was held here, and the culinary club catered the event for them. This journey started when the Transforming Communities launch was being organised last year and we were asked "You've got that culinary club at your school, haven't you? Would they be eager to cater an event for us?"

And we thought "Well, why not?" and "What do we need to do so that there are no stumbling blocks for this?"

It is life together engagement with the church and the community beyond the school. For us, it's about the application of Plenty in our North Lakes community.

Fit for Purpose touch points

The Fit for Purpose conversation has helped us reflect on our buildings and how they're used and how they can be leveraged, additionally the Lakes College Board will be reflecting on the Governance Review and offering our perspectives.



We have also been really involved for the last three years in the Plentiful Mentoring Leadership Program with several staff being involved each year. I think this is an excellent opportunity to be present with the church community and to see what we can learn in that space and what we can offer as well.

Transforming our community

An extremely important piece of plentiful work in the college is our Environmental and Sustainability framework which we are finalising and is the work of the last two years. We have been able to come together in this work and seek advice from the UCQ Sustainability team which was such a valuable opportunity to leverage the experience of someone who's part of our organisation with deep knowledge and expertise.

A key area that has been highlighted for us is our commitment to and covenant with First Peoples. We have looked at our scholarships, applying Uniting Church thinking with a focus on those young people who would like an education at The Lakes College, but genuinely can't afford it. This has led to a scholarship program for First Nations young people where each year we have two 100% scholarships available from years 7 to year 12. We are seeking those in the wider church who would like to partner with us in this

to allow us to do more to support First Nations young people in this way.

It has also really ignited in us a desire to meet our community, our First Peoples, where they're at. And so, we engage on an annual basis now with our families in yarnning circles so that we can have time just to converse and consider perspectives and gain feedback. It has impacted the way we do NAIDOC Week and what a multicultural day might look like, and this year we are planning our first Walk on Country. Being intentional about our relationships with our First Peoples has meant that we now have a much larger number of young people and their families who choose to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, because it's okay to do that. That's been an incredible blessing for us.

Final thoughts...

To be honest with you, I think there's probably more ideas and opportunities evolving because people have been given the opportunity to engage, the permission to engage. That's really what it is. Part of the culture here is that we don't have to do it all ourselves. We engage where we have something to offer and where somebody else may have something to offer us. It comes with a real heart of reciprocity.

The real value of these plentiful conversations has been the philosophical underpinning, the theological, philosophical, social justice, values-based position that helped us really understand and frame our thinking about what it means to be a Uniting Church school.

It's given us firm footing. And permission to go - why not?



Moving Forward

Discipleship

The Discipleship journey will continue – we will keep collaborating with people throughout the Synod who are active in making disciples in order to encourage what is working, to build the capacity of others, share the lessons we are learning and celebrate the changes we see. We are committed to growing ongoing networks and connections across the whole church that can continue to build a culture of discipleship, however we are very aware that ultimately disciples are formed one life at a time.

We will be working with congregations and presbyteries to explore how the 'Life-long Discipleship Framework' can be best used and applied at a local level (see page 6, point 3). This

framework outlines 10 key areas that need to be developed as part of an overall disciple-making strategy and we will be supporting people with further tools, training, events and networks. Our focus on empowering those who work in children's, youth and families ministry will continue as we provide inter-generational worship and discipleship resources for the key seasons of the church calendar. These resources will be available from our new website and web-hub in 2024.

Ultimately disciples are formed one life at a time.



Discipleship

- Refreshed discipleship culture
- Church innovation
- Engaging young people



What is in focus for the next 12 months?



Transforming Communities

Our call to transform communities remains central to our history, our identity, and our future and we recognise that there are active individuals, groups, and congregations across the state. The Transforming Communities Reference Group will work in collaboration with policy, advocacy, and communication subject matter experts, to finalise and implement an Advocacy Strategy and Framework, develop key government and stakeholder relationships, and engage with Congregations and Presbyteries to connect social justice advocacy and action and build momentum and energy across the Synod.

The three priority areas – Wellbeing and Mental Health, Covenanting with First Peoples, and Environment and Sustainability – will continue to guide our efforts. We will be working to establish the Friendly Spaces program (mental health pilot) in new locations across Queensland and to develop and implement a mental health

Advocacy Strategy. The Voices of our Covenant exhibition launched at Wesley House will be toured to schools and congregations to share the First Peoples stories that have been collected with the widest possible audience in the life of the church. A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) team will be established to work in collaboration with the Queensland Regional Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). They will explore and implement a First Nations leadership program in the Queensland Synod. An Environment and Sustainability Assessment Tool will be rolled out to enable us, as a Synod, to better measure and improve our strategies and actions in this space.

There are active individuals, groups, and congregations across the state.



Transforming Communities

- Wellbeing and mental health support
- Covenant with first peoples
- Environment and sustainability






Fit for Purpose

The significant work in the Fit for Purpose space will need to continue over the next several years. Any governance resolutions made at 37th Synod will be implemented, and active support will be provided to the Act 2 consideration of governance options. Uniting Church Leadership Practices content will be broadly embedded into leadership programs and

Work in the Fit for Purpose space will continue over the next several years.

induction programs for leaders across the synod. In the areas of Mission Presence, Health, and Vitality there will be a focus on developing frameworks, processes, and guidance to support the work of the Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee (MC3) and enable collaborative mission-focused property projects.



Fit for Purpose

- Governance reform
- Operational efficiencies
- Mission presence, health and vitality
- Leadership development



Life Together

Life Together is now, more fully than ever, understood and embodied as a way of working and being in relationship across the life of the church in Queensland. It is central to the thinking about governance change and will continue to influence the efforts of all the working groups and the connection and alignment with boards, committees, and commissions.

Life Together will continue to influence the efforts of all the working groups.

collaborating with the Office of the Synod Communication team to take the thoughts and ideas expressed in the Life Together workshop and use them to weave the story of the UCA identity and ethos into web content, recruitment, and onboarding resources. The third Plentiful Mentoring Leadership Program will be offered in 2024, continuing its focus on mentoring and cross-Synod relationships.

The Life Together working group are



Life Together

- Mission partnerships



Voices of our Covenant

Weaving interconnection and story – in conversation with Kym Korbe - Koa, Kuku Yalanji (Waka Waka); Covenanting Working Group co-chair and Manager UCQ RAP Program

When we started as the Covenanting Working Group in 2019, we were just feeling our way through. As we progressed in who we were as part of Plenty, we started realising that we wanted more knowledge about the experience of First Nations people in our church. We had a feeling that we knew a lot about our First Peoples' interactions within our church communities, but we wanted to learn more and understand more deeply what it meant for them as faith people in relationship with the church and the theology of the church. We wanted to understand how that intersects with language and culture, and the importance of it intersecting with language and culture.

We chose to slow the process down and be more intentional around being in relationship, and to develop a project to film people and hear

them tell their story, creating a product that will be something that can be built on for future generations. We also hoped to build a framework of First Peoples interacting with the church and telling and sharing story across the Synod.

We were adamant that if we were going to contract someone to lead this piece, it had to be a First Nations person. We worked with Jo-Anne Driessens who is a photographer and researcher and a Koa (Guwa) / Kuku Yalanji woman. She has 25 years of experience as a photographer and a background in a variety of arts and community roles.

My real hope was that we would have an online resource that could also speak to people who are in engagement with the church but not in the congregational sense - maybe connecting through our agencies or receiving care through our agencies. More particularly, we wanted to have something that perhaps speaks to children who were in out-of-home care. That is a challenging space to be for a First Nations young person. It's also a challenging space to be for those who might care for First Nations kids. We hoped to create a resource for people who might, through the goodness of their heart, offer foster or kinship care to First Nations kids, a resource that lets them listen to elders, know their stories, build understanding. We want them

to know that they're linked to the church and linked to our hope, that we are interconnected.

The Regional Queensland Committee of the UAICC, also came about through this work. It was through the storytelling project that we built trust with all those people that we needed to build trust with. We built the trust so that they could step into the space and say, "Okay, let's reimagine how we can be."

Plenty was the framework for us to see this become something bigger than just the Covenanting Group, to consider how our work fits in with discipleship, our life together, and mental health and wellbeing. We stepped into that space, we put proposals forward, and we were bold. They could see that we were all passionate and also importantly that this work fit with the Synod's strategic vision.

I think the most important thing for individuals, groups or congregations, is to find out about all the plentiful work that is happening. Each of us really need to do the deep work of understanding where our heart is - is it mental health? Is it really understanding what discipleship means to you? Or do you want to be able to work better with your colleagues across the church? I think whatever it is that's speaking to your heart, talk to those around you that might have similar feelings and engage with the parts of Plenty that mean the most to you. Reach out and find out where your ideas can fit.



Plenty actions - status report


Acronyms in this report:


- **TTO** Transitioned to Operations
- **BCF** Board for Christian Formation
- **FIP** Finance, Investment & Property
- **MPAG** Missional Presence Advisory Group
- **TCRG** Transforming Communities Reference Group
- **UAICC** Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
- **MET** Mission Engagement Team
- **SME** Subject Matter Experts
- **CYYAF** Children, Youth, Young Adults & Families
- **WG** Working Group
- **CPR** Church Planting & Regeneration
- **BDU** Business Development Unit
- **Scope Changed** means the actions have either been combined with similar initiatives, or the agreed approach was changed after further reflection.

Plenty actions - completed

MISSION PRIORITY	COMMITMENTS	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	STATUS	
Discipleship	Discipleship	D1 - Heart Reset - Lent	D1a - Invitation to prayer & fasting	Complete	
		T1 - Unified Position Statements	T1a - TCRG will develop agreed Position Statements on a range of issues, aligned with the UC T1b - The TCRG will work with comms to build awareness of a common purpose	TTO	
	Transforming Communities	T3 - Advocacy Infrastructure	T3c - Work with comms to explore options regarding spokespeople in the church	TTO	
		T4 - Build Capacity for Advocacy	T4c - MET will create and manage a "roadshow", visiting 12 locations over 12 months	TTO	
	Covenant with First Peoples	T8 - First Peoples Story	T8b - Create a Reconciliation Action Plan groups to connect the Indigenous cohort and share stories	Scope Changed	
		T9 - Develop First Peoples Leaders	T9b - Identify First Nations leaders and emerging leaders and encourage them to grow T9c - Explore a mentoring and leadership program with existing First Nations staff and lay people	Scope Changed	
		T10 - Reinvalidate Covenant with UAICC	T9f - Ensure that Indigenous candidates and theological students are provided with First Nations mentoring allies T10a - Host gatherings with UAICC network in QLD to shape its voice, story, hopes and participation.	Scope Changed	
		T11 - Contribute to First Peoples Flourishing	T10c - Review the existing Covenant relationship between UAICC and the church in order to inform and align T10d - Support First Peoples leaders to facilitate safe spaces in which local First Nations can build understanding	Complete	
		T12 - Care for Creation Plan	T11a - Identify and promote representation from QLD Synod on the NAIDOC Committee to enhance engagement T11b - Collaborate with the Environmental Sustainability Working Group to include First Peoples' unique perspective	Scope Changed	
		Environment & Sustainability		T12a - Collaborating with SME's to develop a Care for Creation Position Statement T12b - Collaborate with SME's to develop the Care for Creation Action Plan 2030 for consideration at the 36th SIS	Complete
	Fit for Purpose	Governance Reform	F1 - Upgrade Governance Framework	F1a - Review governance models and develop working criteria for good governance F1b - Roundtable event to explore other governance models relevant to the UC F1c - Develop a research brief, based on the outcomes of the above & collate an overview	Complete
			F2 - Improve Procurement Collaboration	F2a - Initiate a 'Strategic Procurement Forum', with formalised and representative involvement F2b - The Forum & SMEs to develop an procurement education module leaders F2c - The Forum will collate and promote existing procurement opportunities F2d - The Forum will list and promote free & paid corporate and professional services F2e - The Forum will promote One Church as a significant purchaser - externally	TTO
Operational Efficiencies		F3 - Culture of Continuous Improvement	F3b - The Forum will manage the development of a training module on continual improvement F3c - The Forum will collaborate with comms to promote good news stories on efficiencies	Scope Changed	
		F4 - Missional Presence Advisory Group	F4a - Collaborate with FIP Board to create the Missional Presence Advisory Group (MPAG) F4b - The MPAG will work with the Presbytery Synod Interface group to explore property and missional health & vitality F4c - MPAG will identify the triggers for consultation with MPAG for new projects F4d - MPAG will identify pilot initiatives for true co-located opportunities	TTO	
Mission Presence, Health & Vitality		F5 - Asset Database & Property Module	F5a - Develop an asset and maintenance database across One Church	Scope Changed	
		F6 - Consistent Leadership Culture	F6a - Review the Basis of Union and other UC guidelines to align leadership with mission F6b - Review existing leadership frameworks and create leadership practices to support culture	Complete	
Leadership Development		F7 - Leadership Pathways	F7a - Identify training, education and leadership programs that contribute to shaping leaders	Complete	
		Mission Partnerships	L1 - Realignment of UC story L2 - Opportunities for Interrelationship	Scope Changed	
Life Together		Mission Partnerships	L1f - Work with BCF to facilitate leadership to tell the story of the church	Scope Changed	
			L2c - Explore building a collaboration-related KPI's into all roles across the Synod	Scope Changed	

Plenty actions - active

MISSION PRIORITY	COMMITMENTS	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	STATUS
 Discipleship	Discipleship	D2 - Model Culture	D2a - All to lend effort & influence towards discipleship culture	Started
			D2b - All to develop relationship and model discipleship practices	Started
			D2c - Ministry agents annual review of discipleship practices	Upcoming
			D2d - Share discipleship stories in gatherings	Started
			D3a - Employ support staff to free up Pres Mins to champion discipleship	Upcoming
	Refreshed Discipleship Culture	D3 - Reshape Presbytery Resourcing	D3b - Refocus Pres Mins role towards discipleship & strategic mission	Upcoming
			D3c - Employ CYYAF Leader in each pres to provide resources and create networks	Upcoming
			D4a - All will identify discipleship coaching and mentoring programs, both internal and external, to support leaders	Upcoming
			D4b - Pres Mins and other key leaders will facilitate the creation of discipleship communities of practice	Upcoming
			D5e - BCF oversees the development and delivery of a Discipleship Primer	Started
	Church Innovation	D5 - Formation and Training	D5f - Offer the Discipleship Primer to all to help them understand what discipleship means in their unique context	In Progress
			D6a - MET & Discipleship WG will consolidate and deliver a simple Foundational Discipleship Strategy tool	Started
			D6b - Develop and provide options of coaching and mentoring networks to develop capacity with the tool	In Progress
			D6c - Pilot this tool with both an urban and rural congregation to ensure its efficacy	Upcoming
			D6d - Make the tool available, with the Discipleship Primer above, to help congregations with their strategy	Started
Engaging Young People	D7 - Review Health & Vitality	D7a - MET will work with pres mins to integrate a simple process for using the tool, to support health and vitality	Upcoming	
		D8a - Create and curate discipleship content for use across the church, accessed from a resourced web space	Upcoming	
		D8b - Create framework to clarify Church Planting and Regeneration processes	Started	
		D9b - Develop CPR capacity in presbyteries	Started	
		D9c - Develop CPR capacity for everyone (churches, schools etc...)	Started	
Discipleship	D9 - Planting & Regeneration Strategy	D9d - Presbyteries to identify people that have a heart and capacity to undertake a CPR	Upcoming	
		D9e - Presbyteries to review systems and processes to ensure adequate support is offered for CPR projects	Upcoming	
		D10a - Representatives Discipleship WG, FIP Board & BDU will consider new income streams and establish grants for CPR	Started	
		D11a - Mission Leaders across all entities will collaborate to adopt a framework for working with CYYAF	Started	
		D11b - BCF & chaplains, practitioners and TCQ will create and deliver a CYYAF Primer for congregations	Upcoming	
Church Innovation	D10 - Funding Streams	D11c - Pilot this CYYAF Primer in two presbyteries	Upcoming	
		D12 - Discipleship WG, MET & Mission leadership identify existing networks of CYYAF practitioners across the Synod	In Progress	
		D12b - The Synod Office will invest in coaching and mentoring of these leaders through relevant networks	Upcoming	
		D13a - The Synod Office will develop a resourcing website/hub to make resources available	In Progress	
		D13b - Moreton Rivers Presbytery will take the lead in developing an annual gathering for youth & young adults	Upcoming	
Engaging Young People	D13 - Central Resourcing for CYYAF	D14a - The Synod Office will create policy to facilitate participation of those under the age of 35 in church roles	Upcoming	
		D15a - Congregations and schools/educational facilities will work together to nurture faith & discipleship for CYYAF	Upcoming	
		D15b - Invite congregations currently connected to these facilities to undertake the Discipleship Primer	Started	
		D15c - CYYAF Practitioners will facilitate opportunities for CYYAF to serve in Shared Life, Flourishing Communities	Upcoming	
		D15d - UCQ Connect 100 Team to identify aligned projects that can connect CYYAF with churches	Upcoming	
Discipleship	D14 - CYYAF Policy	D15e - Empower Chaplains to identify opportunities where CYYAF can have greater participation in service	Started	
		D15f - Presbyteries and congregations will promote the use of the Period of Discernment process by CYYAF	Upcoming	

 Transforming Communities	Transforming Communities	T2 - Advocacy Governance Process	T2a - TCRG will be a sustainable and strategic presence within the Synod's governance structure	In Progress	
		T3 - Advocacy Infrastructure	T3a - Review existing structures to form streamlined, integrated advocacy infrastructure	In Progress	
		T4 - Build Capacity for Advocacy	T3b - Develop an Advocacy Framework which will provide opportunities to maximise influence	In Progress	
		T5 - Pilot W & MH Service	T3d - Explore, determine and use good practice mechanisms for measuring the impacts of advocacy efforts	Upcoming	
		T6 - W & MH Advocacy	T4a - TCRG will explore and resource local networks to build capacity on-the-ground for engagement	Upcoming	
		Wellbeing and Mental Health Support	T8 - First Peoples Story	T4b - TCRG will consolidate, curate and share resources and tools to support advocacy	Upcoming
				T5a - Develop a "One front door, No wrong door" pilot to improve mental health services and wellbeing	Started
				T6a - Develop and conduct an advocacy campaign that breaks down the stigma with Mental Health	Upcoming
				T6b - Resources will be collated and shared across all parts of church via an online platform	Upcoming
				T7a - Build networks and communities of practice to come together to share knowledge and resources	Upcoming
		Covenant with First Peoples	T9 - Develop First Peoples Leaders	T8a - Revisit the Short Book initiative to facilitate conversations with Indigenous people on faith & truth across the Synod	In Progress
				T8c - Collate existing Church Reconciliation Action Plan modules & for cultural appreciation, to be offered across the Synod	Upcoming
				T8d - Liaise with TCQ to review ministry learning materials to for culturally relevance for First Nations	Upcoming
				T8e - Resource Local Indigenous Uniting Church communities to host local Walk on Country experiences	Upcoming
				T8f - Use Narrative Practice and mobile technology to capture oral history and story, from local First Nations	Upcoming
Environment and Sustainability	T10 - Reinvalidate Covenant with UAICC	T9a - Develop a leadership development approach for First Nations people which acknowledges local Eldership	Started		
		T9d - The Chaplaincy Commission will recruit and resource and First Nations chaplains	Started		
		T9e - Explore pathways for 12 interns per year, using the CareerTrackers program	Started		
		T9g - Explore a learning and delivery for theological and ministry training, similar to the Shalom Certificate 4	Started		
		T9h - Build stronger connections with Nungalinga College, to support and invest in future tertiary level educators	Started		
Operational Efficiencies	F3 - Culture of Continuous Improvement	T10b - BizCom will collaborate with First Peoples to build yarning circle practice into the process for 36th Synod in Session	In Progress		
		T10 - Reinvalidate Covenant with UAICC	Started		
		T12c - Implementation of the Flourishing Creation Plan (new)	Started		
		T13a - Working Group to reach out to their networks to continue to share experience to enable advocacy and change creation	In Progress		
		T14a - The Working Group and others involved with the community of practice will collate and curate resources locally	In Progress		
Leadership Development	F5 - Asset Database & Property Module	F3a - Develop a Synod-wide 'extranet' for forms and processes, including feedback	Upcoming		
		F5b - Develop an education module around property held by the Property trust	Started		
		F7b - Address identified gaps and recruitment into a leadership pathway	Started		
		F7 - Leadership Pathways	In Progress		
		F8a - BCF will adopt the leadership Framework and provide accountability, governance and strategy	In Progress		
Mission Partnerships	L1 - Realignment of UC story	L1a - Develop narrative of roles and relationships to the Property Trust	Started		
		L1b - Collaborate to develop an integrated story of the UC including new ways of telling the old story	Started		
		L1c - Develop and deliver written and visual resources showcasing this story	Upcoming		
		L1d - Develop and deliver an engagement plan that will embed story	Upcoming		
		L1e - Inclusion of the One Church history, ethos and calling, in onboarding processes	Upcoming		
Life Together	L2 - Opportunities for Interrelationship	L2a - Explore opportunities for gatherings to focus on connection and celebration	Upcoming		
		L2b - Design and deliver the next iteration of the Plentiful Leadership Program	In Progress		
		L2d - Facilitate opportunities to learn about the different parts of the church ie. open days	Upcoming		

Thank you

to all members of the working groups from all of these organisations. We are truly grateful.



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| Presbytery of Carpentaria | Presbytery of Mary Burnett | Presbytery of South Moreton | Presbytery of Bremer Brisbane | Presbytery of The Downs | Presbytery of Central Queensland | Presbytery of Moreton Rivers | Board for Christian Formation |
| Atherton Uniting Church | BELLS Faith Community | Elanora Uniting Church | Graceville Uniting Church | Central Downs Uniting Church | Rural ministry | Albert Street Uniting Church | Finance and Investment Property Board |
| Babinda River of Life Church | Uniting Life | Flagstone Community Centre | Oxley Uniting Church | Dalby/Jandowae Uniting Church | | Emmanuel Uniting Church - Enoggera | Remuneration and Nomination Committee |
| Mornington Island Uniting Church | | Real Life Christian Church | Toowong Uniting Church | Middle Ridge Uniting Church | | Newlife Church Brisbane | Uniting Education Schools and Colleges |
| | | Southside Uniting Church | Sherwood Uniting Church | St Stephen's Toowoomba City Uniting Church | | Redcliffe Uniting Church | Synod Standing Committee |
| | | Newlife Church Robina | | | | West End Uniting church | |





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