

Brunswick Uniting Church Strategic Plan, 2015-16

Vision Statement

Brunswick Uniting Church strives to be a Christian community that loves God, seeks wisdom, cares for and engages with each other, the wider community and the earth, travelling with justice and love.

Values

1. We worship
2. We welcome all
3. We care for each other and nurture our faith
4. We engage with the local and global community
5. We enable the ministries of our church.

Introduction

This is the Strategic Plan for the years 2015-16. In it we seek to define the objectives and strategies by which we will follow and live out our stated Vision and Values, together with some indicative actions we are planning or considering. It is a living document, which may change and grow with the congregation during the life of the plan. It will be reviewed periodically by the Church Council and renewed for 2017 and beyond, most likely for a longer period.

Many of the themes identified in previous planning rounds are now being (or are about to be) addressed through the **Pastoral Care Plan** and through **ABCD** (the Asset Based Community Development process being implemented by the JAM Committee and other interested members). Successful implementation of these two initiatives is the top priority for Council in 2015, and we expect that they will bear fruit that we can't yet predict – hence the 2-year term of this Strategic Plan.

The focus of our thinking around this Plan has been on new objectives and strategies to develop or consider. At the same time, our congregation is doing many wonderful things already. While we want to note the vital contribution of many of these activities, some activities are not listed here – we haven't sought to be comprehensive. That doesn't mean they're not valued – they are!

Value 1: We worship

| Objective / Focus | Strategy | Actions | Priority for 2015? |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| A. Continue Sunday morning worship as the heart of our community and mission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue offering worship that is faithful and vibrant, and that is challenging and inspiring to as many as possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worship Committee will continue guiding and evolving the services Continue recruiting and training/mentoring worship leaders (liturgy, music, other roles) Find additional ways to incorporate congregational talents | |
| B. Explore possibilities of alternative worship styles (at separate times and as elements in Sunday morning service) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support emerging initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the exploration of monthly Saturday night worship with more scope for alternative/creative forms Support Sunday night “Table Church” group Support current review and trial of new times and groups for Meditation | Yes |

Value 2: We welcome all

| Objective / Focus | Strategy | Possible Actions | Priority for 2015 |
|--|--|--|-------------------|
| A. Welcome newcomers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Care Plan “Hospitality” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discern and appoint “Ministers of Hospitality” (in addition to Sunday morning welcomers) who engage with newcomers on Sunday morning and undertake to journey with those who want to connect with the congregation in an ongoing way over a period of up to 2 years. Ministers of Hospitality will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Build relationships with newcomers – Introduce them to others, initially during morning tea and then intentionally as appropriate. – Expose them to the opportunities for involvement at BUC. – Softly, softly encourage participation through personal contact, responding to interests, and referral. – Be driven by the needs of the newcomer. • Continue to welcome people explicitly within the liturgy and notices, by inviting everyone to morning tea every Sunday and through periodic Welcoming ceremonies | Yes |
| B. Reach out to “welcome” those who may not know they’re welcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tertiary students, incl. those not associated with families and the student house program. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run regular Student House dinners that are open to all students & tertiary age people | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the nature of our community to the wider world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use our Sydney Road window displays to engage with passers-by • Maintain and periodically update our Website | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mulling” evenings for people aged 25-35ish • Building Community Committee to oversee interest-based groups and other forms of gatherings; BCC focus is to support relationships & community among existing members but the groups themselves can reach out to include new people | Yes Yes |
| C. Size & demographics of congregation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a long term goal/prediction to help shape our planning? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Pastoral Care Plan after it becomes established to assess its success in helping address the risk of alienation in medium-sized church • Study demographic trends (in UCA and generally) with a view to anticipating the long term future for our congregation and others in our area – not about “counting heads” but planning for the foreseeable future of the church • Investigate further the research done on church size and how this applies to BUC | In 2016 |

Value 3: We care for each other and nurture our faith

| Objective / Focus | Strategy | Possible Actions | Priority for 2015? |
|---|---|---|--------------------|
| A. Provide appropriate pastoral care for all members of the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Care Plan “Compassion” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the recommendations in the Pastoral Care Review in regard to “Compassion”, recruiting volunteers for tasks as needed | Yes |
| B. Care for specific groups of members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide pastoral care through the Sunday Morning Program, including implementing “Culture of Safety” systems | Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the parents of pre-schoolers with social events and programs | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run (and review) Mentoring Program and YUCY | Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Adults | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek ways to engage and nurture the faith of young adults including “Mulling” and Student House Dinners | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum seekers & recent immigrants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Persian Bible Study • Find more ways to engage with asylum seekers addressing such things as partnerships & possibilities, boredom, depression, work, relationships | Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue small group activities that cater for older & less mobile members | |
| C. Growing as disciples | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for all members of our community to be inspired, challenged and nurtured in faith—Pastoral Care Plan “Community” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipleship & Education Committee will plan and run a calendar of programs; the (mandated) priority for 2015 is to run a session on Leadership/nature of Elders in the UCA (to be achieved through the Power and Leadership series) • Expand Meditation as a pathway to church/ faith • Strengthening spiritual resources for daily lives, e.g. Lent-Pentecost booklets • Pastoral Care “Community” committee will support and resource other initiatives as the interest/energy arises, and monitor to identify gaps | Yes Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • Teenager programs • Student & Young Adult programs • Foundations of faith programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run a Sunday Morning Program for children (see “Pathways to the River” report) • Run a SMP Youth program; Mentoring Program also serves this need to some extent • Run Student House events; alternative worship opportunities; support to attend conferences & other events • Organised as needed (e.g. Persian Bible Study, baptism/confirmation programs) | |

Value 4: We engage with the local and global community.

| Objective / Focus | Strategy | Possible Actions | Priority for 2015? |
|---|---|--|--------------------|
| A. Find and respond to needs in the local community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Olive Way to maintain & expand ministry to target groups. Strengthen existing links with local mission and welfare agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflect on / develop clearer understanding of who our “target groups” are/should be Maintain & strengthen congregation’s links with Olive Way | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and expand mission to/connection with the local community - new avenues, needs and niches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ABCD Workshops Explore congregation’s gifts in becoming a place to engage the community. | Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging in other ways with asylum seekers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue financial and in-kind support for ASWC Identify opportunities to work more closely with ASWC | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate ways of becoming an integral part of the Sydney Road community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct short term creative/artistic projects to promote our church as a space that the community feels connected to and that is there for them Use our building/property for mission. e.g. Being a space for community use - Space to create connections with wider community (art, book launches), workshops. Pop up approach - temporary gardens, projects. Community garden. Generate ideas through ABCD process. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring relationships with ACES (aboriginal community elders service) | | |
| B. Develop and maintain our relationships with the wider Christian community and other faiths. (develop wider relationships, cont’d) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and improve relationship with BIUC (Indonesian congregation) More intentional interactions with Presbytery and Synod (sharing/requests) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular catch-up conversations between key leaders Council is writing to Presbytery/Synod about Safe Church and Financial systems – how can we develop better ways for congregations? (e.g. Synod-provided dedicated church admin software package) Through Presbytery, identify ways that we can use our gifts (including but not only musical) to support other congregations | Yes Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain ecumenical activities and continue to seek opportunities for joint action Develop interfaith connections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ian will continue with local ecumenical network Carlyne will continue to attend the Moreland Interfaith Gatherings and make links with the congregation where appropriate | |

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| C. Give practical expression to our care for the environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade “green” services at the church | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install solar panels • Change electricity provider • Make better use of rainwater tank? Check with ASWC about their use. | Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in environmental actions as a congregation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend climate change marches together (make new BUC banner) | |
| D. We encourage and assist our church community to stand up for global justice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums on specific issues • Identify appropriate opportunities for action as a congregation • Develop spaces/groups for reflection on our individual activism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAM periodically organises sessions/series • Letter writing/petitions/protests that all can take part in • Nonviolent direct action (e.g. Love Makes A Way) – training, planning, action, reflection • Use existing small groups/create new ones? | Yes |

Value 5: We enable the ministries of our church.

| Objective / Focus | Strategy | Possible Actions | Priority for 2015? |
|--|--|---|---|
| A. Be a generous and giving congregation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major appeal in 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council to convene working group by June 2015 | Yes |
| B. Financial sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear financial plan (variation to the current default projections) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance committee & Council to develop plan and budget by mid-2015 that accounts for increasing & new costs and sets a specific and realistic target for congregational giving (which if met would result in sustainable budget) | Yes (endorsed by Congregation Feb 2015) |
| C. Be intentional about our ministry and missional planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute regular strategic reviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor this strategic plan – for Council discussion every 6 months Set new Strategic Plan in late 2016 for 2017-2022 | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that use of property, resources & facilities matches our vision and mission commitments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconsider a “Stage 2” renewal, including office space for ministry team, counselling rooms, youth hall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the current needs/wants/nice-to-haves, and what solutions can be found (short term or mid-long term)? Continue to invest in UCA ethical investments | Yes (related to financial plan) |
| D. Adopt best practice governance and records management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement MYOB for finances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MYOB implementation underway Once installed and set up, develop procedures for efficient and effective division of labour between Bookkeeper and Treasurer | Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop appropriate and helpful system for Safe Church records | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Helen in developing governance/responsibilities for all aspects of safety Support Safe Church team in developing records management – liaise with Presbytery & Synod to share best ideas and resources | Yes |
| E. Useful and up-to-date communication strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review website, e-mailouts & other potential new media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shawn will liaise with Communications team about best approach to do this in light of other priorities | |
| F. Support our ministry team, staff, committee members and volunteers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place staff support and procedure structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New position of Staff Support (Andrea) Complete the revision and recontracting of Julie’s role Clarify role and reporting lines for Carlyne’s position Review Mission & Outreach position before re-advertising | Yes Yes Yes (done) Yes |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure committee members and others aren’t burning out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage everyone to take sabbaticals Ensure people are able to resign from roles – not their job to find a replacement | Yes |