

“On The Way Together”

Spirited Conversations towards Future Directions

Four Conversations in Lent:

**Week 1: Gifts Mapping Conversation
(Who are we and our neighbour?)**

Week 2: Appreciative Conversation
(What is our mission?)

Week 3: Foresightful Conversation
(Where does God guides us?)

Week 4: Engaging Conversation
(How can we be a missional church?)

Before our conversations starts...

Since Wesleyan church held the first service on 17 Oct 1852, we've been worshipping and participating in God's mission among our community for over 165 years. This year, with changes of UnitingCare structure into Uniting, we are facing a transitional period as a Parish Mission. What has been the high point and low point of our church so far? and What is the direction God has been guiding us in this journey?

As we prepare a new phase as Parish Mission, let us come before God with thanksgiving for what he has done for 165 years with us, and also discern together where God is guiding us in the continuing journey for God's mission.

Listening from Joshua 1:6-9

6 “Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. 7 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not

be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Key Theological affirmations

The following are the key assumptions in developing On the Way Together.

- The whole church is God's and its future is in God's hands.
 - The UCA in Victoria and Tas. is called into being and sustained by God to be a missional church.
 - God's purpose for the church is to be the sign, fore-taste and instrument of the reign of God...
- ...(See the Summary paper for more affirmations)

4 movements, 5 Life giving themes

The project will take four movements:

1. Inquiry
2. Imagination
3. Innovation
4. Implementation

After initial Inquiry process about 40 groups of 1500 people participated the conversations and five themes emerged from the conversations:

- Encountering Christ in community
- Living God's transforming story
- Spirited listening, giving voice
- Liberating stewardship
- Engaging diversity.

...(See the Summary paper for more information)



INTRODUCING “ON THE WAY TOGETHER”

The Synod Meeting of 2007 requested the development of a new Strategic Plan for the Synod. A small Synod Strategic Plan Team has been working to design a planning project, including collecting various opinions from Uniting Church agencies and Councils.

As a part of the process, a report called “One the Way Together” has been produced and accepted at the Synod Meeting of 2008 as a formal document to be used in agencies and Councils.

This Lenten Studies are based on the Synod report, therefore it needed some adjustment in order to be used in a congregational context, as a Lenten study material.



Some words are changed and orders of conversations are reorganised, in order to accommodate our church's special needs. for example the suggested three conversations are: Asset Mapping conversations, Foresightful conversations, and Appreciative conversations

These conversations posed two key questions:

Who are we? and What are we called for? then added a third: Who is our neighbour?

We will explore together these key questions as pilgrims of God's church following four movements:

1. Inquiry
 2. Imagination
 3. Innovation
 4. Implementation
- May God continue to journey with us in Lenten season.

Gifts Mapping Conversation

What do we mean by 'gifts'?

The original report used a different word, 'assets'. However, instead of saying 'Asset Mapping Conversation', we will use 'Gifts Mapping conversations' because it shows what we have is originally the gifts of God, not our own. When we focus on only what we have in our possession, we often fail to see God, and tend to hold on to our tangible assets.

Of course, like assets, gifts includes many area; Physical things, abilities, skills, associations and relationships, information and money.

The report identifies 5 different categories of gifts.

1. Physical assets (gifts)
2. Individual assets (gifts)
3. Associational assets (gifts)
4. Institutional assets (gifts)
5. Economic assets (gifts)

Most importantly, Gifts means 'strengths' that God has given to us. Let us now think together what gifts God has given to us.

Practical guidance

This task will require approximately 40-45 minutes.

In your small group, you will visit each table that has particular categories of gifts to think about.

First 5-7 minutes spend time to talk about the particular gifts and write down the gifts that your group found on the paper, then when the signal comes, use the second half of your time to look for hidden gifts in that area. (the list of questions are below this page.)

Gifts Mapping Conversation is a process to look for who we are, and what God has given to us.

Let us collect those gifts we received during our 100 years of ministry in Monash Congregation.

We will divide into three groups, and will visit three table in turn.

Table 1: Physical and Economic gifts

- Physical things that the church values
- how the church funds its activities and what the church spend its funds on.

Table 2: Individual gifts

- things that the church personnel are good at, and knowing something about.

Table 3: Associational and Institutional gifts.

- relationships the church has with other bodies, groups, organizations.
- the institutions your church belongs or is affiliated with that influence or make decisions that impact your church

After 10-15 minutes time each group moved to the next table to finds gifts and hidden gifts in that category.

LOOKING FOR HIDDEN GIFTS (STRENGTHS)

After 5-7 minutes of Gift Mapping Conversation, please read following questions and find our hidden gifts.



- What signs of God's grace, compassion and liberation has your church witnessed in the last 3-5 years?

- What are some of the gifts or capacities in the people associated with the church or of the church itself that you might take for granted?
- If your church asked other people or groups in the wider community what your strengths are, or what they most appreciated about your church, what answers might you receive?
- What are some of the strengths in your church that you have become aware of, but do not often use?
- Do you have any gifts that only become apparent in times of crisis? if so, what are these gifts?



THIS LENTEN STUDIES...

We are invited to journey with and respond to two questions during this Lenten study.

1. Who are we?
2. What are we called to ?

Conversations Towards Future Directions

Table 1

1. Conversation about mapping our gifts

Physical and Economic gifts

-Physical things that the church values

-how the church funds its activities and what the church spend its funds on.

2. Looking for hidden gifts.

Conversations Towards Future Directions

Table 2

1. Conversation about mapping our gifts

Individual gifts

-things that the church personnel are good at, and knowing something about.

2. Looking for hidden gifts.

Conversations Towards Future Directions

Table 3

1. Conversation about mapping our gifts

Associational and Institutional gifts.

- relationships the church has with other bodies, groups, organizations.
- the institutions your church belongs or is affiliated with that influence or make decisions that impact your church

2. Looking for hidden gifts.

Conversations Notes

Group 1: Physical and Economic gifts

-Physical things that the church values

-how the church funds its activities and what the church spend its funds on.

- Church buildings, Parish Mission Centre
- Investment (financial)
- Dorcas land, Richardson St Flats, Port Melb Manse, Albert Park Op Shop, Kinder, Man's shed

Looking for hidden gifts.

- Ethel hooper 105 years
- Church bus-collect from home and return them home
- Church supports women in Africa
- Kinder teachers
- young people

Group 2: Individual gifts

-Things that the church personal are good at, and knowing something about.

- Music
- Cooking, teaching,
- Connecting with local community
- high proportion of tertiary educated members
- Welcoming and open to change/experimentation
- faithful
- spread of ages and cultures
- leadership skills
- wisdom of age
- working together/ teamwork

Looking for hidden gifts.

- small contributions
- providing opportunities for individual contact allowing individuals to find a place
- providing attractive outdoor space for passive use.
- Sharing prayers and taper lighting opportunities
- children- questions, clear thinking including special needs children
- not panicking in times of crisis.

Group 3: Associational and Institutional gifts

-relationships the church has with other bodies, groups, organizations.

-the institutions your church belongs or is affiliated with that influence or make decisions that impact your church

- Presbytery - helping conflict, assisting in calling and filling in vacancies
- Synod - governance
- Community groups - mission partnership, Skillsfest
- SPICC-ecumenical partners

Looking for hidden gifts.

- Interaction between churches - World day of prayer, Good Friday walk etc.
- Assembly- hidden - Worship workshop in July,
- - Education, doctrinal liturgical resources
- underutilises relationships with schools, shops and markets