

New Intergenerational Ministry Model

Why this ministry?

Because intergenerational ministry is essential for our church, the UCA in WA, to not only survive but thrive in the coming decades. The body of Christ is a family and with healthy relationships between the generations and investment in those in the earliest years of their faith formation, the whole church thrives. Where there is life and faith development in children, youth and young adults, the church is a fuller picture of the family of God, more spiritually healthy and equipped for Christ's mission in the world.

But isn't this just about ministry with young people?

Yes, with an emphasis on **with**. Young people need older people, and older people need younger people. Our incoming president, Deidre Palmer, recently noted that children are like the 'canary in the mineshaft' - if the air is toxic, they are more sensitive to the fumes and the first to be affected. It is a warning to us adults that the atmosphere must change or we too will leave, or die. Young people are not just a litmus test for whether our churches are spiritually healthy, they are an essential part of a healthy, functioning *family*, and their nurture and development must be invested in. This investment will be maximised when we focus on those with the **heart** for ministry **with** young people.



So where to from here?

Two (pathways) are needed to ensure that financial investment is well spent. As the church seeks to grow spiritually healthy families across the generations it is useful to compare it to our own family journey.

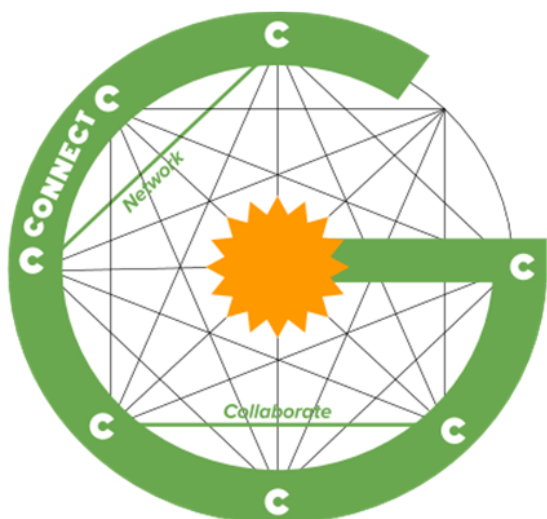
Definitions

Communities:	Congregations, faith communities, schools, agencies, ministries in the UCA with a desire to engage in intergenerational ministry in some way.
Champions:	Lay or ordained people in local contexts (communities) who 'champion' intergenerational ministry in their context such as volunteer youth or children's leaders, chaplains, paid 'staff' or Ministers/Pastors
Ministry Agents:	Presbytery placements in the 'Uniting Generations' ministry unit (previously First Third)

1. On the Ground (in the Uniting Church 'communities')

Families, especially parents, learn from their parents *and* from one another. No parents learn about sleep patterns, breastfeeding or early childhood development on their own, or only from books and websites. Building relationships with other parents and their babies, sharing resources, experiences and failures is essential for a family to grow.

For effective intergenerational ministry, a similar approach will be essential. Those with a heart



for ministry with young people, whether ordained, lay, volunteer, or paid, in local congregations, faith communities and schools etc. (Uniting Church 'communities') must be encouraged to share experiences (successes and failures), resources, and discoveries, and be open to sharing or opening-up programs or events (where practical) to other communities. **These people are our 'champions'** (they champion the cause in whatever way, large or small, God has enabled them). When those with a heart for intergenerational ministry work together, bonds are created between communities and the whole 'family' benefits.

In a nutshell, our 'champions' and communities must **network** and **collaborate** effectively. **We must connect.**

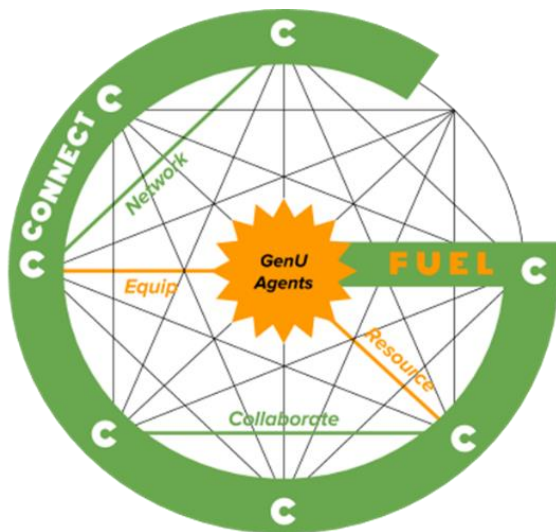
Explanation of the logodiagram:

- The model diagram is a G (Uniting **G**enerations - see more below) and bears resemblance to our UCA logo where it isn't a complete circle (the work isn't done yet)
- Green represents a sense that **the time is now!**
- The 'C's around the outside are UCA **C**ommunities (congregations/faith communities/schools etc.) which are all **connected** to each other, bound together in unity but also represent the local **C**hampions in those communities.

2. From the Centre (Presbytery Intergenerational ministry unit)

In the new model, we see intergenerational Ministry Agents playing a kind of “Child Health Nurse” role. With new parents the Child Health Nurse can play an essential role in *helping* them connect and resource each other. They also assist with practical advice and specific needs, but their most helpful role is to help create a connection that new parents continue to build on, sometimes for many years.

There will be an element of skilled intergenerational Ministry Agents offering ‘expertise’ to those championing intergenerational ministry in local settings and guiding and encouraging them through the journey, but their primary role would be in building connections between ‘families’, the communities in the Presbytery, so that they can resource, encourage, equip and mentor one another.



Ministry Agents with this focus are essential to complement the roles of those in the other ministry areas within the Presbytery’s structure (eg. education, multicultural), to facilitate the co-operation of UCA communities for ministry, encouraging collaboration, sharing of resources and teamwork between ministers and lay leaders.

In a nutshell, Uniting ‘communities’ and their intergenerational ministry champions require ministry agents to **equip** them for effective networking and **resource** them for effective collaboration. **We must fuel our church for this ministry.**

Explanation of the log/diagram:

- In the middle is our Uniting Generations ‘Ministry Agents’ who helps connect our communities, **fueling** the champions for effective ministry
- The strength of the system is enhanced by the centre, but is primarily in the many **spokes** (connections) between communities

In this new model, agents **equip** the local champions and communities with everything they need to **network** well with each other for encouragement and sharing, and **resource** the efforts of champions and communities for **collaboration** which produces greater effectiveness.

So what would this look like?

In 2018 the (currently named) First Third Committee proposes having 1.0 FTE Ministry Agent(s) (currently vacant) and 1.0 FTE Support Officer (currently First Third staff employed). The 1.0 FTE for Ministry Agent(s) could be open to being multiple part timers, allowing for a larger team with diverse skills and experience to work together in achieving the goals of the new model. It is expected that Ministry Agents with practical *experience*, applicable *skills*, and a high *character* for discipleship of key leaders across the Presbytery will be required. Practitioners who can resource, equip and train from their current or recent experience, whilst also able to develop effective networking and collaboration across the Presbytery is valued.

On the ground , Ministry Agents will focus on ministry *with* young people through the development of **champions** in a local and regional context through sharing of resources, ideas, events, programs, and training, thereby ‘cross-pollinating’ the places of life and health in our Presbytery.

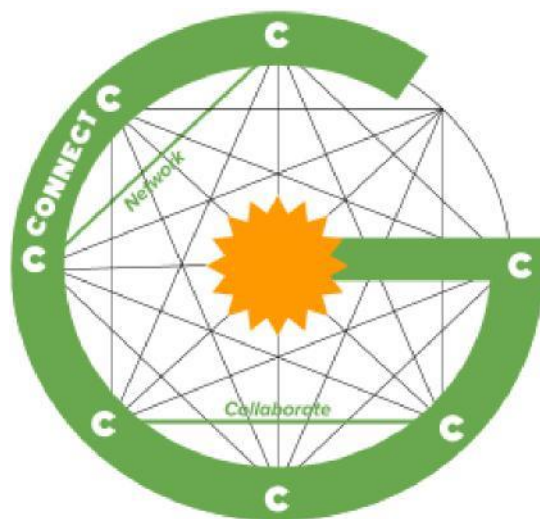
This will involve...

Network:

- Identify communities invested in intergenerational ministry and build a **communication network** between champions of these ministries.
- Encourage champions to share the learnings and fruit of the resources and events they utilise through the communication network
- Encourage the gathering of local champions and young people at existing events to build relationships and unity.

Collaborate:

- Encourage champions and communities to share existing and newly created **resources** that are bearing fruit in intergenerational ministry through the communication network.
- Assist our communities to collaborate on new and existing **events and programs** which build faith in young people and encourage growing relationships across generations.
- Facilitate long and short-term collaboration on events, programs and resources between Uniting Church communities, Presbytery bodies (eg. Multicultural) and ecumenical church communities.

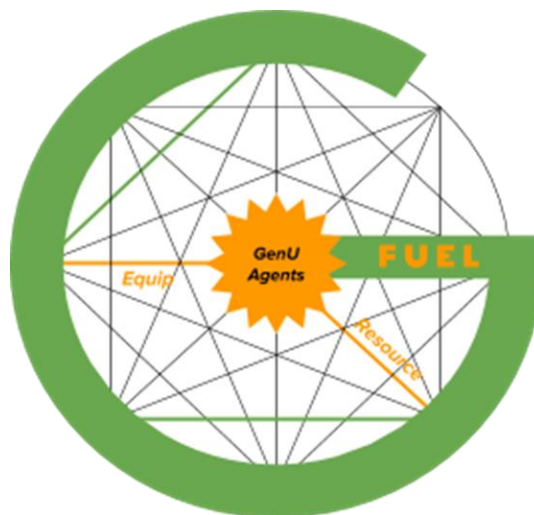


From the 'centre', Ministry Agents will resource and equip strategically selected local champions. For congregations to effectively resource each other and co-operate and collaborate well, there will be a need for encouragement and equipping for fruitful and reproducible intergenerational ministry.

This will involve:

Equip:

- Gathering local champions for **mentoring and encouragement** through relationship and partnership in intergenerational ministry, using technology (eg. video conferencing) where helpful
- Work with leaders of other Presbytery bodies (eg. Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership, Multicultural Ministry, Strategy and Mission Planning Committee) to ensure engagement with young people in all areas of ministry and develop opportunities for champions to gain **skills and training** necessary for equipping others for effective intergenerational ministry.



Resource:

- Provide champions and communities with effective and simple electronic tools for effective communication which complements and leads to further face-to-face sharing and collaboration.
- Manage a pool of resources for camps and events for communities to access if required.
- Promote events for young people which build morale, provide leadership opportunity and facilitate faith development, and **assist and support leaders** of these initiatives.

How is this different from the old 'First Third' Model?

There was intention in the old model to focus on particular congregations by having 'specialists' in placement in those locations. The approach of the new model will be heavily focused on where there is already a heart for and traction with ministry across generations, and particularly with young people. The new model will work more closely with those lay and ordained people already championing intergenerational ministry in their local context. No Ministry Agent would be placed or employed in a specific congregation, unless in the case of a part time Ministry Agent if they held another position, also part time, with a congregation or school.

What does success look like?

Our WA strategic directions at present are:

- 1. Developing a Culture of Open Communication*
- 2. Promoting a Culture of Faith Formation and Faith Sharing*
- 3. Developing and/or Promoting Relevant Education, Training and Leadership Development Resources, Programs and Projects*
- 4. Increasing the Church's Capacity for Community Engagement*

We believe the immediate priority (1 year goals) of intergenerational ministry development in WA lies primarily in the first two strategic directions, with the last two being longer term priorities (5 year goals).

1. Developing a Culture of Open Communication

Network: 1 year goal: To establish a communication network of intergenerational ministry champions and young people from all communities and Presbytery bodies wishing to participate

Equip: 1 year goal: To gather champions for encouragement and support on a regular basis and facilitate mentoring, sharing and growth in leadership.

2. Promoting a Culture of Faith Formation and Faith Sharing

Collaborate: 1 year goal: To bring communities with similar interests together for the establishment of new events and programs for faith development across generations.

Resource: 1 year goal: To identify all events and programs for young people in our presbytery which can be shared across the communications network and opened to wider participation, and provide assistance and support where needed.

3. Developing and/or Promoting Relevant Education, Training and Leadership Development Resources, Programs and Projects

5 year goal: To explore educational and faith development opportunities for champions and communities in collaboration with other Presbytery bodies including CEDAL and programs based in local Uniting Church communities.

4. Increasing the Church's Capacity for Community Engagement

5 year goal: To equip our communities for effective and balanced ministries of worship, witness and service by developing 'models' (examples) of *missional* intergenerational ministry together with local communities and champions.

What's in a name?

It has been expressed by many that a new name is needed for the new model which communicates the purpose of this continuing ministry focus area. So in conclusion, we present to you **Uniting Generations**, *fueling our church and connecting our communities for effective intergenerational ministry.*