



Uniting Church in Australia
Presbytery of Western Australia



A Handy Guide to Mission Planning

The five marks of mission

Tell	Proclaim the Kingdom's Good News
Teach	Teach, baptise, and nurture new believers
Tend	Respond to human need by loving service
Transform	Transform society's unjust structures
Treasure	Safeguard the integrity of creation

This document is a companion to a larger document, "Mission Planning: Playing our Part in the Mission of God". It provides a summary of how you may engage with the mission planning process.

There is space for making notes, which can act as a prompt as you plan. It is not a template because every congregation is unique, and your mission plan will not look like the mission plan of another congregation.

By using this document, you are being invited to reimagine how the Body of Christ can live and work in your unique context, to ask how you will engage with contemporary culture and with those people who are not already connected with the church.

Mission is good news!

Preparing

Decide to take this discernment seriously and agree to a time commitment. This may take anything between a few concentrated weeks and may even take up to a year.

Spend time listening to the preached word and spend time praying together.

Register for the Mission Shaped Ministry Course and keep a record of your ongoing conversations.

Think about who you need to resource you on this journey, for instance, leaders from within the congregation, Thrive Mission Committee, Presbytery Minister (Mission) or independent consultants.

Make a realistic timeline of what you need to achieve and when you hope to achieve it and choose a framework that works for your group so you can consider looking at identity, purpose and context through new eyes.



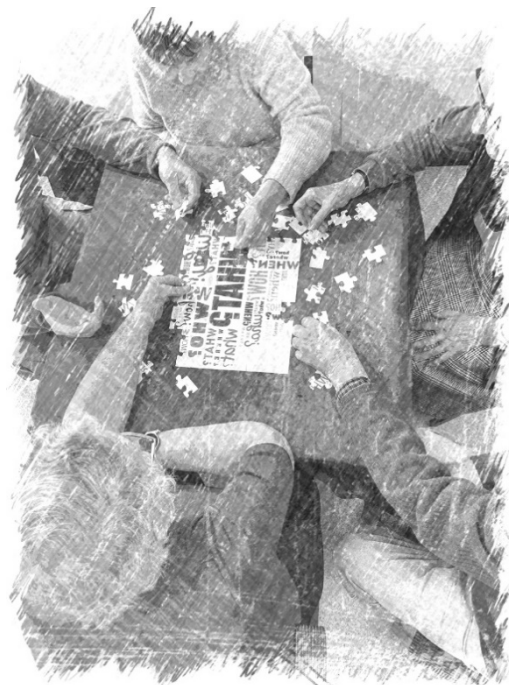
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Gathering

As you listen to God's word and pray together ask the Thrive Mission Committee to share the tool they have developed that will help in gathering information. The following data is important.

- National Church Life Survey
- Australian Bureau of Statistics – details of the community including how many UCA people are included in the census for your local area, local demographics and living arrangements.
- Local Government – make an appointment with your community development officer to find out about their priorities. What can you learn about your community, its strengths, its nature, its needs.
- Local history – what has your community been known for in the past?
- Local church history – Where has your church come from as a community of faith? This is not for nostalgia but to get a sense of what has shaped the congregation over the years.
- What has your church inherited in terms of identity, purpose, and context? Is this still relevant? How deeply does it find expression? Does it need to be honoured or celebrated? Does it need to be maintained or let go? How does this inform decisions about legacy?
- Church attendance data, details of church property and information of key people in the congregation, including those being paid as well as volunteers.
- Numbers of people served by the church, which includes attendance at various programmes, not just Sunday morning attendance.
- Financial information in an easy-to-understand format
- What other churches are there in your vicinity and what are they doing?



Your notes:

Listening

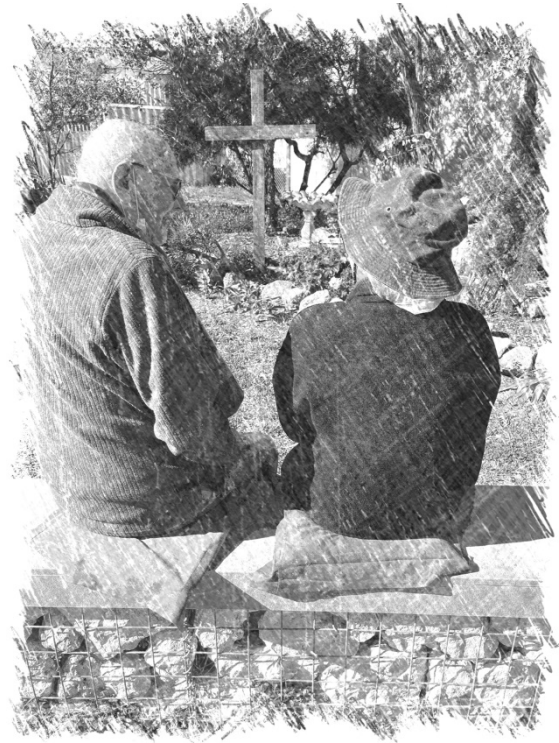
Listen for God's voice, the voices of your neighbours and your neighbourhood, and to each other. Set aside special times when you can pray about the future of the church. Consider a day when people can drop into the church during the day to pray. Set up prayer stations around the church with information about the ideas that have been gleaned over the years, and information about the local community and its needs.

Do some surveys, using Survey Monkey as an online survey and also a paper version for those who prefer. In some cases, it may be better to do one-on-one interviews with individuals but to maintain consistency use the same questions you have used in other surveys.

Prepare a survey that you can use in your neighbourhood, then hold a barbecue, fete, or market day. Make it an enjoyable day but make good use of it to listen to what people think about the church.

When you've recorded all that, you've heard in your listening phase this is a good time to set up a meeting with the Presbytery Minister for Mission or a representative of Thrive Mission Committee to provide them with a snapshot of your Mission Planning process so far.

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Brainstorm outcomes, aspirations, and your sense of call as a community of faith. How can you be 'on a mission' with God? This is an opportunity for every wild idea to be heard and respected. A member of the Thrive Mission Committee or the Presbytery Minister (Mission) will be able to direct you to the enormous number of resources about the multiplicity of fresh expressions of church, mission projects and changes in structures and expectations that are involved in being the church in the 21st century.

It's useful to have these 'dreaming days' in a different location to where you normally meet for business

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Measuring

Measure your capacity as honestly and pastorally as possible; considering the people resources you have, how ready and available people are to be involved in mission, partnership opportunities and the physical resources of finance and property.

Spend time working at becoming clearer about the costs and opportunities. Develop a budget that is realistic as well as visionary.

Consider the barriers in the way and how they may be overcome.

Talk with other congregations or faith communities that have undertaken similar plans.

Some congregations find it useful to do a SWOT analysis, looking at your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

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Focusing

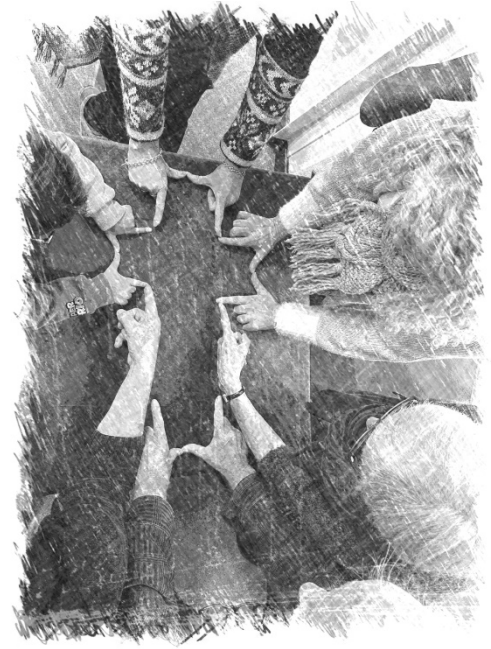
Now you have dreamed big and done some measuring it's time to put them both together. Prayerfully discern a grand plan, focusing on the vision and determining together the overarching long-term goals.

Discern the immediate action plan, stepping out the strategies for resolving the resourcing that is required. Keep good documentation.

Test the call by ongoing discernment and by waiting for consensus and conviction. Consider trialling something for three to six months.

Apply to Thrive Mission Committee for a “start it up” grant to help you test the plan.

Keep the congregation involved throughout the process, always describing it in terms of your identity, purpose, and context – stay positive and excited.



Your notes:

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A black and white photograph showing two people working on a wooden frame structure, possibly a bed or a large chair, in a cluttered room. One person is kneeling and using a power drill on the frame, while the other is sitting on the floor nearby. A large window with a grid pattern is visible in the background.

Create short videos to share with your congregation or take lots of photos and share

Be honest about the challenges and what opportunities the challenges may open. Use these opportunities to refine your project and planning.

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Reviewing

Review it and do it again. God is always on mission!

Honestly and fairly review the Mission Plan and its effectiveness against the timeline and budget.

Ask open questions like: How could we have improved this? Do we still have a sense that God is calling us in this direction? What have we learned together? Who is willing to ask others to explore future options?

Review using the five marks of mission: To proclaim the good news of Jesus; to teach baptise and nurture new disciples; to respond to human need by loving service; to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation, and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Look to the future: Who is willing to explore future options? What and who do we need to continue sharing in mission?

Your notes:

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