



How then shall we live?

— February 10, 2010
Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 Task Group

How then shall we live?

Table of Contents

0.	Executive Summary.....	3
1.	Introduction	4
2.	About this document.....	5
3.	Where are we in 2010?.....	6
3.1	Hobart Community Summary	6
3.2	Congregations and Faith Communities	7
3.3	Leadership & Ministry Workers.....	9
3.4	Property.....	10
3.5	Agency Presence	11
3.6	Strengths	11
3.7	Challenges	12
3.8	Public Voice.....	13
4	Where Might we be in 2020?.....	14
4.1	Hobart in 2020: Setting a new Scene.....	14
4.2	Congregations	15
4.3	Leadership & Ministry Workers.....	16
4.4	Property.....	16
4.5	Agency Presence	17
4.6	Strengths	18
4.7	Challenges	18
4.8	Public Voice.....	18
5.	Navigating the Journey Toward The Vision.....	20
5.1	Now.....	20
5.2	Soon.....	20
5.3	Later.....	21
6.	The "Business as Usual" Option.....	21
7.	Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 Process for 2010.....	23
7.1	Project Facilitator & Presbytery Staff Resourcing.....	23
8.	Recommendations.....	24
8.1	Recommendations to Presbytery	24
8.2	Encouragement to the Uniting Church in greater Hobart.....	25
	Appendix A: Missional Questions	26
	Appendix B: Local Church Life Survey 2009	27
	Appendix C: Strengths: Local Church Life Survey 2009	29
	Appendix D: Imagine....	34
	Appendix E: Time of Listening	37

0. Executive Summary

How then shall we live? presents elements of a vision for a distinctive Uniting Church presence in greater Hobart beyond 2020. The Report is supported by recommendations to the Presbytery of Tasmania, which commissioned it. The Report offers a clear and visionary alternative to the struggle of maintaining the past. *How then shall we live?* invites all who read to join in imagining into life a Church of vital faith and vigorous diversity responding to God's call to it.

The report, the work of a task group of lay and ordained, male and female, young and young-at-heart, draws insights from the 2009 *Time of Listening*, and the 2009 *Local Church Life Survey*. These insights have been augmented by extensive inquiry, reading, discussion, reflection and discernment.

By most external measures the past 20 years have not been kind to the Uniting Church in greater Hobart. We are fewer in number, struggling to maintain older buildings, have fewer ministry workers. In many ways church members feel increasingly isolated from their host communities. We feel stressed, tired, defensive and often without hope. Congregational members are stretched to maintain support of ministry, maintenance of buildings and week to week pastoral care, with little awareness of the potential for the Uniting Church to have a prophetic voice in the city. As we have discovered during our preparation of this report, these are the painful realities of our life as we enter 2010.

Yet we have found strength, commitment, altruism, passion and even optimism tucked away. We note with delight the emergence of innovative and creative expressions of worship and faith community. We treasure the faithfulness of the people of the church, committed to each other and to God. We have experienced a people longing for the way of Jesus, seeking to understand more clearly our purpose, waiting for new vision and imagination to emerge.

How then shall we live? captures the essential elements of a vision for our future in 2020 and beyond. We believe our future will be characterised by faithfulness to the way of Jesus, by commitment to justice and service, by collaboration and cooperation, by innovation and missional imagination. We must transform a pattern of inward-looking, struggling congregations into a vigorous presence which carries the Christian gospel into the life of the city. Past traditions and heritage must be moulded into creative and relevant expressions of the gospel, and must not be barriers to change. The UCA in Hobart will be a network of congregations, faith communities, fresh expressions of church, and agencies giving voice and life to the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout this region.

How then shall we live? identifies key tasks, themes and directions for the next ten years as together we bring to fruition a vital, exciting future. It identifies areas of priority for us to consider now, soon, and later. This is an invitation to the individual members, congregations, faith communities and agencies of the church to enter into the task of imagining, dreaming and realising this vision; to enter into the task of seeking the Spirit of God as a people committed to giving expression to the mission of God. While every effort ought to be made to ensure wide consultation and agreement, we believe the future of the Church is in such jeopardy that groups unable to reach consensus should not unreasonably delay the action of those who will commit to responding together.

This is a report that names what is, expresses what might come, and proposes some means of making the journey together. It is equally vision and invitation. We invite you to read with intent, to ponder with sincerity, to discern prayerfully and faithfully, and to discuss thoughtfully and robustly as you encounter *How then shall we live?*

Most of all, however, we invite you to be renewed, refreshed, encouraged and challenged in the journey toward 2020 and beyond as we follow in the way of Jesus.

1. Introduction

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart faces an uncertain future. We are confronted with a challenge to our understanding of who God is and who we are: the question of the relationship between the church, the One who calls it into being, and the community within which we live.

The Uniting Church has always *understood itself* as a missional church, an understanding spelled out in Paragraph 3 of our formational document *The Basis of Union*. It is however, fair to say that the Uniting Church has not always *acted* like a missional church. This is just as true for the Uniting Church in greater Hobart as it is in other contexts.

Often our focus has been on building our kingdom, preserving our identity, protecting our assets and ensuring our survival. While there are exceptions to this, it is evident that survival, assets and habits have steered the ship on many occasions. Meanwhile the world and Hobart have changed around us in ways we have sometimes failed to comprehend.

Over the past thirty years, the Uniting Church has shrunk dramatically by almost every measure. It is no longer appropriate for us to carry on ignoring what is going on around us and trying to ensure our institutional survival by continuing to do what we have always done.

The primary question we must ask is not "*what do we need to do to survive?*" Far more important is to ask "*what is God calling us to be?*" This is not a 'purpose' question leading to programs and agenda, but instead a question of our identity and vocation as a people of God.

If we grapple with this question and come to a renewed understanding of what it means for us to be missional church in the greater Hobart area, then activity and structure will follow. As Craig van Gelder puts it:

*The church is
The church does what it is
The church organises what it does.
(the ministry of the missional church, 2007)*

The implication of van Gelder's outline is that we must first understand our calling, our identity. This then informs our practice, helping us understand how it is that we are to live, what we are to be about. Finally we ought to think about how we shape our community, how we are organised, structured and resourced. Too many times in our history we have approached this from the wrong direction.

It is time for us to reconsider just what the purpose of church is, and how we are to live out our calling to follow the way of Jesus in changing and challenging times.

We believe God is doing a new thing among and around us in greater Hobart. Our guiding question is "*How might we discover what is our role, our place, our identity in this new thing?*"

A **missional church** is....a journeying people who seek to discover again and again what God wants them to be doing in the world.

A **missional imagination** is not about the church; nor how to make the church better, how to get more people to come to church, or how to turn a dying church around. It's not about getting the church back to cultural respectability in a time when it has been marginalized. All of these are good things, but they aren't the focus of a missional imagination.

God is up to something in the world that is bigger than the church *even though* the church is called to be sign, witness, and foretaste of God's purposes in the world. The Spirit is calling the church on a journey outside of itself and its internal focus. Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury, summarizes this imagination in this way: "It is not the church of God that has a mission. It's the God of mission that has a church."This imagination turns most of our church practices on their head....Rather than the primary question being, "How do we attract people to what we are doing?" it becomes, "What is God up to in this neighbourhood and how do we need to change to be part of it?"

Based on "Introducing the Missional Church: What it is, Why it Matters, How to Become One". Roxburgh/Boren. 2009. Baker Books.

2. About this document

How then shall we live? has been prepared by the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group. This task group was convened in May 2009 by the Presbytery of Tasmania and given a task to re-vision the Uniting Church in greater Hobart:

We hope that the Re-visioning the city document will be provocative and imaginative. At its heart it will not focus on organisational structures, buildings or ministerial placements, but on faithful response to Christ and will proclaim in word and deed the substance of our faith. It is out of that sense that actions, strategies and rational decisions will be made, not the other way around.

2020 Uniting Alive: Re-visioning a Distinctive Uniting Church in Greater Hobart

The task group understood that it was being asked to listen, to learn, to imagine and then to speak out what it sees as significant for the future life of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart. The task group accepts that it has been asked to listen with appreciation and respect and to speak with courage.

The task group has endeavoured in this report to present a vision for the future of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart. This vision incorporates what the task group perceives to be the purpose, or vocation of the church, and God's calling for the church to the communities of the greater Hobart region. We believe this vision is based upon our strengths, and therefore represents an ambitious but achievable response to the challenges that lie before us.

In accordance with its charter, it is not the intent of the task group to lay out a roadmap for the future of the church, to define new structures, or to point to particular buildings which should be closed or congregations which should merge. To do so would be to tackle these issues in the wrong order. Those are decisions which, if necessary, will come later.

Rather, this paper deals primarily with the question of identity. It presents a long term vision, and identifies a range of issues for us to collectively and individually consider as we re-vision ourselves toward the call to participate in God's mission in this region.

A range of additional resources are included in Appendices to this report. In particular we draw your attention to Appendix D, a collection of imagined stories of the Uniting Church in 2020. These are stories drawn from our present and our possible future that give expression to the kind of missional imagination we have endeavoured to describe in this paper. These stories are not intended to define the future of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart but to illustrate something of its nature. We encourage you to read these stories carefully and to consider what future stories of your own might be imagined.

In preparing *How then shall we live?* the task group has drawn upon many sources and resources. We have carefully considered insights drawn from the National Church Life Survey of 2006 and of the specially commissioned Local Church Life Survey conducted in 2009. We have conducted a range of conversations with people from congregations, faith communities and agencies under the banner of the *Time of Listening*. We have been resourced in theological reflection by representatives of the Presbytery of Tasmania and the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, together with reading a range of authors' perspectives from both print and digital media. As we have pondered these various sources we have talked and listened, debated and shared, prayed and discerned. This report is the result of all of that work over a period that has spanned 15 months since conception.

The *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group submits *"How then shall we live?"* for the consideration of the presbytery and the greater Hobart Uniting Church community.

3. Where are we in 2010?

To imagine a future, we must begin by understanding our current situation, our strengths, our assets, the challenges that face us, and the context within which we live.

3.1 Hobart Community Summary

Hobart is the capital city of the island state of Tasmania. The greater Hobart area has a population of a little over 200 000 – or approximately 40% of the state's residents.



Fig1: Map of greater Hobart region showing location of Uniting Church congregational properties

Hobart was one of the earliest settlements established by the arriving British. It is at the centre of a long history of broken relationship between first and second peoples, a relationship which remains volatile and at times difficult both within the church and the wider community.

While the ethnic nature of Hobart's population is changing thanks to rising immigration, the arrival of refugee groups, and an increasingly evident international student population, the region has much lower proportions of ethnic and migrant communities than other major Australian cities. Hobart residents earn, on average, less than their counterparts in other Australian capital cities and are more likely to work in blue collar industry. Hobart has a larger cohort of ageing residents than the national average.

The geography of Hobart contributes significantly to the culture of the city. The population is dispersed and split by the significant natural barrier of the Derwent River, and shaped around the base of the iconic Mt Wellington. Consequently the population of greater Hobart is spread in relatively narrow corridors and clustered together in often distinct communities. Hobart, while referred to as a single city, is made up of a number of municipalities including Kingborough, Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, Brighton, Sorell and parts of Derwent Valley. Each has its own unique character and social profile.

The identity of Hobart as the capital of Tasmania is important in understanding the character of the city. Not only does Hobart represent the seat of government for the state but the majority of community, business and other organisations operating on a state-wide basis are headquartered in Hobart.

In religious terms, Anglican and Catholic heritage dominate in Hobart, while a growing percentage of the greater Hobart population identify as having "no religion". Religions other than Christianity are slowly growing in presence, but still markedly lower than national

averages. 2006 census data on religious affiliation compared with 2001 data for Hobart and 2006 national averages reveals:

Religious Affiliation	% in Hobart in 2006	% in Hobart in 2001	% in Australia in 2006
Anglican	29.6%	33.4%	18.7%
Catholic	21.4%	22.5%	25.8%
Uniting Church	4.3%	5.0%	5.7%
Other Christian	8.6%	8.1%	13.6%
Buddhism	0.7%	0.6%	2.1%
Hinduism	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%
Muslim	0.3%	0.3%	1.7%
No religion	21.4%	17.3%	18.7%

Fig2: Information from Community Social Profile Hobart (greater region). NCLS from 2006 Census data

2006 Greater Hobart Population (15 years +)	2006 UCA affiliation	UCA average weekly attendance
187,000	7,950	550

Fig3: Information from Community Social Profile Hobart (greater region). NCLS from 2006 Census data

3.2 Congregations and Faith Communities

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart consists of a total of 14 congregations, with several fledgling faith communities currently emerging.

Each of the congregations gathers for its principal worship service on Sunday morning. The emerging faith communities gather at a range of times, and two of the congregations also offer alternative worship gatherings at other times.

Several of the congregations exist as the result of a series of amalgamations over the past thirty years. In particular Hobart North, Glenorchy and Scots Memorial have this history.

There is one partner relationship involving two congregations on the eastern shore, and a proposed relationship between four northern congregations is presently under development.

Previous attempts to foster partnership or amalgamation in the city and northern suburbs have resulted in some hostility or suspicion toward contemporary attempts to foster collaboration.

The partnership involving Kingston and Tarooa congregations (and Woodbridge, outside the greater Hobart area) dissolved in 2009.

Congregation Name	Location	Ministry Staff	Partnerships	Approx # attending
Kingston	Kingston	1 full time MOW	Dissolved partnership with Tarooa 2009	80
Lacuna	Kingston	Nil	Supported by Kingston	In recess
Tarooa	Tarooa	Nil stipended	Dissolved partnership with Kingston 2009	10
Sandy Bay	Sandy Bay	0.3 MOW placement (vacant)	Co-located with Cheil Korean	30
Cheil Korean	Sandy Bay	0.6 MOW	Co-located with Sandy Bay	60

Scots Memorial	Hobart City	1 full time MOW	Previous amalgamation	40
Wesley "In the City"	Hobart City	1 full time MOW 0.5 families minister (grant funded)		40 Sunday morning 20 families service (monthly)
Hobart North	North Hobart	1 full time MOW 0.6 Faith Connections	Previous amalgamations	80
Leprena/UAICC	Moonah	1 full time MOW		30
Glenorchy	Glenorchy	1 full time MOW (vacant) shared northern region 0.4 supply	Negotiating with northern region congregations	45
Claremont-Bagdad	Claremont	1 full time MOW vacant shared northern region	Negotiating with northern region congregations	30
New Norfolk	New Norfolk	1 full time MOW vacant shared northern region	Negotiating with northern region congregations	15
Bridgewater-Gagebrook	Gagebrook	0.6 vacant shared with Synod/JIM Grant funded	Partial involvement in northern region	15
Clarence (Bellerive)	Bellerive	Full time MOW (vacant) shared with Lindisfarne	Lindisfarne Sorell	80
Clarence (Lindisfarne)	Lindisfarne	Full time MOW (vacant) shared with Bellerive	Bellerive Sorell	30
Sorell	Sorell	0.3 MOW shared placement with Eastside Care 0.7 (f/t)	Clarence	25
BELLS Faith Community	North Hobart	Supported by ministry workers in placement at Hobart North, Wesley & Royal Hobart Hospital Chaplaincy		10
Faith Beyond	Hobart City	Supported by ministry workers in placement at Hobart North & Wesley		20
Sanctuary	Bellerive	Supported by ministry worker and leadership team at Clarence		12

Fig 4: Information compiled from directory, anecdotal evidence, congregational "A Form" returns for 2008

While in most cases much attention is given to Sunday morning gatherings, there is a wide range of other activities conducted by congregations across the region. These activities are sometimes aimed at supporting and encouraging congregational members, and sometimes at engaging the wider community in service, mission and relationship. While it is not practical to list all such activities, some we think are of particular significance are:

- Red Dove Café at Kingston provides a regular community gathering place. It is well attended and provides a very real opportunity for the Kingston congregation to engage in mission. Claremont-Bagdad and New Norfolk congregations have both recently

begun similar community gatherings which, while in their early days, appear similarly well received.

- Crossroads at Kingston is a regular gathering for those living with disability. In particular the Young Crossroaders group consisting of young people and their families is well supported. In addition, the congregation are exploring options for the development of an intentional community incorporating low cost housing.
- Faith Beyond is a regular gathering in the city supported by Hobart North and Wesley ministry workers. Faith Beyond is a discussion group exploring a range of theological perspectives on faith and spirituality. Faith Beyond has many of the features of a faith community but is not formally constituted as such.
- Scots Memorial hosts the Choir of High Hopes, with a number of congregation members participating in the choir. The choir provides a valuable opportunity to community members to participate in musical activities which build self-esteem and resilience.
- Sanctuary (Clarence) and Lacuna (Kingston) are reflective/contemplative alternative-worship gatherings. Each is different in character, but offers an alternative approach to the traditional worship services offered by congregations across the region.
- B.E.L.L.S. is a new faith community in its earliest days. It is supported by Hobart North congregation and is aimed at providing a place for spiritual exploration, encouragement, worship and community. B.E.L.L.S. gathers around a shared meal.
- The Community Connections Minister at Hobart North works with a team from the congregation to explore, establish and strengthen relationships and connections between the congregation and the wider community
- The Wesley Families Minister works with a group of young families from across the city. The intent is to develop a faith community centred around a regular family-friendly worship gathering.
- Many congregations across the city support school chaplaincy through the Scripture Union managed school chaplaincy programs. Financial support is offered in addition to people being practically involved in supporting the work of chaplains.

3.3 Leadership & Ministry Workers

Ministry workers offer key leadership to the church in greater Hobart. At the time of writing there are nine ministry workers currently in placement with congregations, three in chaplaincy placement with Uniting Aged Care, one chaplain with Royal Hobart Hospital and one chaplain serving with Hobart City Mission. There are presently four vacant congregational placements. Not all placements are on a full time basis.

Those in congregational ministry placements are primarily Ministers of the Word, and in most cases operating in a traditional ministry pattern focussing on worship and pastoral care. Exceptions include the Families Minister at Wesley "In the City", and the Faith Connections Minister at Hobart North.

The Minister at Sorell is in a full time position shared between the congregation (0.3) and Eastside Uniting Aged Care (0.7).

The role of the minister in placement with Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Congress Tasmania) is shared between the Leprena congregation and wider responsibilities with indigenous communities throughout the state.

There are two grant funded positions including Wesley "In the City" Families Minister and the (presently vacant) placement at Bridgewater-Gagebrook. The full time Bridgewater-Gagebrook placement will be shared between the congregation (0.6) and as a Synod Justice & International Missions advocate (0.4).

Congregations in the north (specifically New Norfolk, Claremont-Bagdad and Glenorchy) have agreed to enter into a short term collaboration supported by a full time intentional interim minister. The congregations are presently seeking to recruit to that position, but have begun cooperation and collaboration together in terms of mission and ministry.

Ministry workers until now have largely been appointed by congregations operating independently, and with limited attention given to the broad range of skills available to the church across the region. Many of the ministry workers gather regularly to support and encourage one another, but there is limited opportunity for collaborative work.

Lay Preachers and retired ministers offer a valued and important resource to the church in greater Hobart. Most congregations have some lay preachers (whether formally qualified or not) providing leadership to worship services on a regular basis. In particular Taroona, Sandy Bay, Lindisfarne, Claremont-Bagdad, Sorell, New Norfolk, Bridgewater-Gagebrook and Glenorchy are heavily dependent upon lay preachers to resource Sunday worship gatherings.

Lay preachers are resourced in Tasmania by the Lay Preachers Association, and by the presbytery's Leadership Development minister. Initial training is generally supplemented by a program of ongoing training and education. Uptake of this ongoing training varies widely.

Each congregation or faith community is supported by a leadership team, usually its church council. Church council members face the difficult task of providing operational and organisational management, financial management, property maintenance alongside trying to give attention to spiritual oversight and matters of planning and strategy. In many cases the councils are drawn from a shrinking congregational base, and drawing together a council with such a broad range of skills proves difficult. Much of the leadership resource is used to maintain the operations of the congregation, with consequently little attention given to longer term or strategic planning or spiritual nurture. It is important that the commitment and responsibility shown by leaders are released for mission.

3.4 Property

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart is blessed with a wide range of property to support and enable its work. Each congregation has beneficial use of a dedicated property (with the exception of Sandy Bay and Hobart Cheil Korean congregations who share the Sandy Bay property).

The properties are a mixture of simple traditional structures and refurbished complexes. The age or condition of many of the properties and traditional designs create some difficulty in terms of maintenance, innovation and creative use. Additionally, many of the properties have some form of heritage protection either over the exterior, interior or both, limiting the ability of the congregation to consider redevelopment for contemporary use. With respect to congregational property, we make the following particular observations:

- The Clarence (Bellerive) property has undergone an extensive interior redevelopment in recent years. The resulting property provides a highly flexible multi-use space which enables the congregation to host a wide range of activities and community groups on the property. The Clarence (Lindisfarne) property has also been recently renovated to suit its use and minimise future maintenance.
- Kingston congregation operates from a converted campsite on a large property high in the centre of Kingston. While some of the property is in some disrepair, and the location is arguably not strategic in terms of access for the community, the property as it currently stands offers a peaceful space in the middle of the suburb, and a flexible interior use. There is sufficient land area for substantial redevelopment should that be desired.
- Both Wesley "In the City" and Scots Memorial locations in the city centre are significant. Both are in good condition with income from commercial use of the properties enabling regular maintenance. Scots' property is shared with UnitingCare Tasmania's Scots Childcare Centre, and also offers emergency accommodation in the form of a self-contained unit. Wesley "In the City" are working hard to ensure their inner city property provides a place of refuge. A redeveloped courtyard combined with the free "No Bucks"

Café and frequent community use of the property is combining to achieve the desired effect.

- The congregational property at Bridgewater-Gagebrook is shared with UnitingCare Tasmania's Bridgewater-Gagebrook community mission in a fluid fashion. The property hosts an op-shop which provides a service to the community while supporting the congregation financially. The building is very functional in nature, taking that form to provide some resistance to the high rate of property crime in the area.
- Hobart North congregation are in the midst of planning a major redevelopment of their site. While maintaining the heritage structure of the building, the redevelopment is intended to provide a range of flexible use areas, an increased capacity in the main worship space, and a more accessible frontage to the community. The congregation intend pursuing the redevelopment pending the outcome of the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* process, and have the support of the presbytery's Resource & Development Committee in their approach.

3.5 Agency Presence

Uniting Aged Care and UnitingCare Tasmania have significant presence and operations in the greater Hobart area.

Uniting Aged Care operates four residential facilities providing independent living, and high and low care supported accommodation. The most recently opened centre at Sandy Bay (Queenborough Rise) is a modern well appointed centre centrally located to greater Hobart. Uniting Aged Care provide chaplaincy services at each centre, with three chaplains on staff across the region. The relationship between Uniting Aged Care and the rest of the church in greater Hobart is cooperative, but not close. Congregational ministry workers provide supplementary services to Uniting Aged Care when chaplaincy staff are not available.

UnitingCare Tasmania is a recently established state-wide presence for Uniting Care. Made up of a number of services and agencies throughout the state, its presence in Hobart includes Scots Childcare, Bridgewater-Gagebrook Community Service and the state management function. UnitingCare Tasmania has been recently awarded significant contracts for the delivery of family services in southern Tasmania and at the time of writing is recruiting staff and in the process of establishing an expanded base of operations to support this new work.

UnitingCare Tasmania closely cooperates with congregations, in particular Scots Memorial and Bridgewater-Gagebrook and is also supported extensively by congregational ministry workers and lay people, a number of who participate on UnitingCare Tasmania's board of management.

3.6 Strengths

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart has several key strengths in its people, leaders and property. Some of these strengths are apparent in the results of the 2009 *Local Church Life Survey*, conducted for the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group. These strengths upon which we can build as we seek a new future together include experience and expectation, altruistic disposition, being guided by vision, searching for vocation or purpose, and being formed in faithfulness. See Appendix C for additional information on strengths.

Members of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart have a depth of experience in faith and faith community that is profoundly important to us. Many speak of the significance that faith and congregational life plays in their own life's experiences. There is an expectation that participating in the Christian community results in growth of faith, being cared for, expressing corporate worship, welcoming those who are different, working with visionary leaders, and beginning new initiatives. These are our expectations of life in congregations and faith communities and they are a powerful set of expectations.

We have a strong commitment to altruism; to the helping of those who are disadvantaged or in difficult circumstances. This is true both within our faith communities and beyond. Survey results show a very high commitment to personal action that translates into giving and serving those around us. This disposition toward serving others individually and collectively provides a basis for developing deeper, more sustained and diverse service of others as practical expression of Christian faith and discipleship.

We appreciate those who have the capacity to see and announce an alternate reality; to usher in a new vision. We respond to a vision for our future, our community, our life together. We respond to those who can communicate such a vision. Our true challenge is to nurture those with the capacity to realise a new vision, one that builds upon the strengths and experiences of the past, but draws us into new life, new relationship, and new practice.

Collectively and individually we are drawn to questions of purpose and vocation. We are willing and able to seek the spirit of God, to enter into the mission of God in our community. We are drawn to the questions "what does it mean to be church?" and "what will be distinctive about the Uniting Church?" Many of us give generously of our time and giftedness in pursuit of what we understand to be the vocation or purpose of the church. Our task is to constantly endeavour to discern what the purpose of God is for our congregations and faith communities; and for the whole church in greater Hobart. We need to become even more intentional about our individual and collective efforts at discernment.

Above all we are a people who are committed and faithful. An extraordinarily high percentage of us attend worship gatherings regularly. Almost two thirds of us identify as volunteering in leadership or service in some capacity. Many of us participate in faith-growth small groups, or as already noted in acts of service. Our faith and our faithfulness are important to us. This is a key strength upon which to build a fresh formation of a faithful, Christ-centred community, persistently expressing and demonstrating its commitment to following the way of Jesus.

3.7 Challenges

There are a number of particular challenges facing the church across the region. Often when we think of challenges we look to symptoms such as the lack of families or young people, and start to imagine solutions based upon those symptoms. The task group however, believes there are three interlinked and underlying issues which are need attention: leadership, vision and missional imagination.

Perhaps the most critical issue is that of leadership. We are blessed with administrators, committee members, volunteers in community service, group leaders for Sunday school and so on. We are short however of lay and ordained leaders able to offer genuine, inspirational leadership to the gathered and scattered community and members of the church. Identifying those with the capacity to become a new generation of leaders, and nurture the development of those skills is a task requiring urgent and sustained attention. A particular issue is the recognition that younger and mid-career leaders exercise their faith and leadership roles in work, family and community roles. It is critical that we find ways of being the church that encourage all people to exercise their giftedness and that we do that in ways which do not place undue stress on people, their family or their career.

Closely allied with the leadership question, is the issue of vision. We have noted the challenges facing us in terms of survival, and the tendency for us to be more focussed on 'staying open' and maintaining presence. This difficulty robs us of the capacity to develop, hold up, and seek out a vision for our future that goes beyond the reality of business as usual. When we think of vision, we think of the capacity to see an alternate reality, to describe it, and to help others grasp that possibility.

The third closely related challenge for us is what we might describe as a missional imagination. We need to give freedom to our imaginations, to listen carefully to the spirit of God at work in

our communities, and to cultivate imaginative, creative, innovative responses to what we hear, free from the constraints of history, tradition or polity.

The words of Mark Sayers call us to balance tradition and innovation, and express something of the challenge we believe faces the Uniting Church in greater Hobart:

*The key to all of this though is keeping the balance between adhering to the rules and pursuing creativity and innovation. The Christian movement which ditches the creeds and covenants in favour of total experimentation finds itself looking less and less Christian. The movement which favours creeds at the expense of innovation finds itself theologically correct yet culturally irrelevant. However movements which are able to find the perfect point of tension between creativity and creeds have the ability to become something truly special. (Mark Sayers, *The Origins Project: Creativity and Creeds, next-wave e-zine, 2009*)*

We believe our challenge is to identify, nurture and encourage both visionary leaders and leaders with the capacity to turn vision into action. These leaders will take us forward into a future blessed with a balance of innovation and tradition.

3.8 Public Voice

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart currently has limited engagement in public affairs, and a public voice limited in scope and execution. Participation in public affairs, including the tasks of advocacy and direct action against injustice, are generally limited to the action of individual members or individual ministry workers. We would encourage initiatives such as the "Values lunches: leadership in the 21st century" which have been hosted a city congregation.

The CEO of UnitingCare Tasmania is regularly active in media and public space, offering commentary on a range of justice and social welfare related issues. The Synod Liaison Minister (Tasmania) provides some comment on matters of concern to the church, and in particular seasons of the Christian year.

4 Where Might we be in 2020?

Towards a Vision

If we understand something of where we are in 2010, it begs the key question "where do we want to be in 2020?" What sorts of priorities ought we have? What sorts of patterns of life, of ministry and mission do we hope might emerge? How might our life together look? What might be the matters nearest to our hearts? Where are we sensing that God is taking us?

As we seek to describe a vision for our future for 2020, it is important to identify the patterns of behaviour and practice that we anticipate will mark our life together. In this we join with the authors of *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness* in hoping that we are characterised by:

- discerning our call to God's mission
- biblical formation and discipleship
- taking risks as a contrast community
- practices that demonstrate God's intent for the world
- public witness of worship
- dependence upon the Holy Spirit
- pointing toward the reign of God in our time
- living out our call to God's mission

These we believe will be the distinctive marks of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart in the years beyond 2020.

4.1 Hobart in 2020: Setting a new Scene

While it is true that in many ways, the community profile of greater Hobart is unlikely to change significantly in the next ten years, there are some changes that can be forecast.

The percentage of residents from non-English speaking backgrounds is likely to continue climbing slowly, particularly as more refugee settlement takes place in the region. The isolation and population size of Tasmania is likely however to limit this growth to levels that continue to be below national averages.

The population will continue to age, with projections showing a sustained higher age profile than the general Australian profile likely to continue, or potentially increase. This may have implications particularly for Uniting Aged Care in the services it offers the community.

Unless economic circumstances change significantly, population growth is unlikely to be a major factor for most of the city. Some continued growth can be expected in Sorell, Brighton and Kingborough, placing additional pressure on the community and social infrastructure in those municipalities, and evoking new opportunities for the church in those parts of the region.

It is probable that some political pressure will come upon the municipalities making up the region to consider collaboration or amalgamation. Progress in this area across Tasmania is slow, but economic factors are likely to at least force consideration of this possibility. Whether such changing political or municipal boundaries will impact socially upon the community remains to be seen.

Hobart is not immune in a world in which population and consumption growth is demonstrably responsible for global change even at the level of atmospheric composition, ice-sheets and particularly loss of eco-systems and biological species. Tasmania and Hobart will continue to be prominent in national debate on environmental and resource issues, and at their core these issues are profoundly about 'How then shall we live?' i.e. purpose, community and creativity.

4.2 Congregations

In 2020 the Uniting Church in greater Hobart will be made up of a diverse network of congregations and faith communities. In each case the congregation or faith community will have given sustained attention to developing a missional imagination and foundation in its life and ministry.

Worship gatherings will be varied in time, location and format, and will be shaped in response to the church's renewed understanding of its calling or vocation. Worship that uses contemporary language, music and concepts will sit alongside gatherings informed by traditional practices and music. Regular contemplative and alternative worship gatherings will take place throughout the city.

Congregations will support, equip and encourage the establishment of a number of faith communities and fresh expressions of church across the city. In some cases these will be the result of collaboration between leadership teams in different congregations, and with the support of the team of ministry workers in place across the region. Some faith communities will be incarnational in nature, established within particular sub-cultures or community sectors. Examples will include young families, youth, and migrant communities. Some will be multi-cultural and multi-age in profile and shaped by particular theological, justice or social concerns. Faith communities will be at least as concerned with missional practice centred on gospel issues of justice and social inclusion as they are with sustaining worship activity. Some faith communities will use Uniting Church property, while others will operate from houses, cafes or other public space.

Congregations as they currently exist in 2010 may continue in various parts of the city, providing a home for a spiritual community concerned with engaging a missional imagination in supporting, challenging and encouraging the wider community. The boundaries and barriers between different congregations will be much less obvious, with frequent cooperation and collaboration on a range of issues.

The congregations of Hobart North, Wesley, Scots Memorial, Cheil Korean and Sandy Bay will have worked carefully to foster stronger collaboration and partnerships in the city-centre, in the process overcoming some of the past hurts and the fears generated by previous experiences. Together the congregations will work to actively engage in mission and ministry in the city, giving attention to the student community, migrant/ethnic communities, those disadvantaged within the city centre community, government and business presence, and a growing inner city residential population. It is unlikely that all four of the city-centre properties will continue to host congregational presence.

Hubs will have been established in the suburban north, south and east of the city, providing a home to a regional congregation, and a base for a network of smaller congregations and faith communities. In each case the hub is shaped by the particular social profile of the sub-region. Congregations operating from the hub do so with a strong commitment to serving their sub-regional network, local community, and frequently work in partnership with other community groups and faith communities in their local area. Worship will be a reflection of the missional life of each community.

Some of the existing congregations will have amalgamated to form these hubs, choosing to do so based upon the opportunities that collaboration and strength provide, rather than out of desperation to survive.

As a whole church, the Uniting Church in greater Hobart will be far more concerned with participating in the mission of God, with serving in the wider community, and with being a people of God, than with its own survival. The church will dream imaginatively, risk freely and resource courageously. The church as a whole across the region will be committed to beginning at least one new, innovative, experimental venture every year, and will have successfully done so since 2012. Some of these new ventures continue, while some have been short-lived.

Congregations and faith communities will work hard to collaborate and partner with other community groups and organisations, moving beyond their property to engage in ministry and mission in the wider community. In particular congregations and faith communities will work not only to offer generous hospitality as hosts, but to live as guests, accepting the welcome and hospitality of others. In so doing, they will follow the way of Jesus.

4.3 Leadership & Ministry Workers

Leadership of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart will have taken a quite different shape by 2020.

Ministry workers in placement in the city will be called and placed to the region, using the structure of a "Regional Collegiate Ministry". This will be actively supported by the Presbytery of Tasmania, and will result in a multi-disciplinary, multi-skilled team of ministry workers serving the whole church in the region.

The particular skills of ministry workers will be available where they are needed, with cooperative and collaborative partnerships between congregations enabling ministry workers to move freely throughout the region. In particular the team will include those with skills in resourcing, equipping, nurturing and encouraging, with developing creative contemporary worship and liturgy, with supporting and sustaining traditional worship, with shaping and supporting mission among young people and families, and with operating in areas of social injustice and disadvantage.

As a team the ministry workers will be far more concerned with supporting, training and resourcing the church than with conducting mission and ministry on its behalf.

Lay leadership will be the foundation upon which the life and mission of the church is built. Lay leaders will shape and resource worship gatherings, sustain the operational life of the church, invest in long term and strategic planning, and will establish and lead creative missional ventures. New and emerging leaders will be nurtured through an active leadership development program, and will be free to operate according to their strengths and gifts.

Leaders will be resourced and supported by the presbytery who will nurture new leaders, develop skills for leadership, foster creativity and innovation, and offer a wide range of educational and developmental activities, including access to theological education both within Tasmania and beyond.

The flexibility of the church will mean that it will be willing to cease various activities and operations when it becomes apparent they are no longer sustainable. This will result in leaders being released to work in areas where there is energy and imagination, rather than simply working to keep the existing activities going.

The church in greater Hobart will have given serious consideration to the manner in which its lay and ordained leadership team is structured and organised, and to the shape of relationships between congregations, faith communities and agencies that will facilitate the development of this new approach to leadership.

A renewed and invigorated leadership across the region will inspire and release a new missional imagination in the church here.

4.4 Property

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart will continue to access a range of property resources in 2020. Property decisions will be based upon the missional commitment of the congregations,

the suitability of properties for a range of community, spiritual and practical uses, and the long term viability of the sites. In decisions on properties, traditional use and history will be considered, but will not be the determining factor. When we are focused on our call to participate in the mission of God we will find that there are alternatives to owning property.

The suite of property available to the church will be looked upon as a gift from God, provided through the faithfulness of previous generations, and as tool and a resource for use in today's missional activity. We will understand property as a resource to be shared generously with the wider community.

Some property will have been redeveloped, with particular attention given to flexibility of use, ease of community access, and suitability for a range of worship styles, and community activities. Redeveloped properties will have appropriate facilities designed to enhance the capacity of the church to practise hospitality.

Some traditional church properties may be maintained, preserving the heritage value of the properties while not compromising their usefulness to contemporary communities. The church will have entered into cooperative relationships with a wide range of partners in order to develop effective and contemporary use of existing properties.

The city centre properties will have undergone significant change of use taking them beyond hosting congregational life in the traditional manner.

Some suburban property will have been rejuvenated according to opportunities and in response to the hubs spoken of earlier. (See Section 4.2 pg 15). As a result some congregations will have opted to dispose of unsuitable property. Congregations who have committed to a long term future together will consider every property option – including maintaining one or more existing properties, or moving to a new site entirely.

4.5 Agency Presence

The agencies of the Uniting Church will have a strengthened presence and operate in close collaboration with each other, and with the congregations and faith communities of the Uniting Church across the region.

Uniting Aged Care will continue to deliver a range of services to an ageing population. Ageing at home, together with a variety of residential options will be part of its suite of services. Uniting Aged Care will give particular attention to the role of chaplains, and the importance of chaplaincy in providing holistic care solutions. Uniting Aged Care will work closely with congregations to facilitate the continuation and emergence of faith communities within its residential facilities. Property redevelopment will include consideration of the merits of collaboration with congregations and with UnitingCare Tasmania

UnitingCare Tasmania will have cemented its presence across the region, providing a comprehensive support service for families and young people. Its services will be linked with, but not dependent entirely upon government funding, the agency having sought alternate funding sources to ensure its mission can continue to be delivered. UnitingCare Tasmania will be an active partner in collaboration with congregations, faith communities, and Uniting Aged Care. This collaboration will extend beyond physical co-location and will involve UnitingCare Tasmania offering a range of services to congregations and faith communities from its expertise. UnitingCare Tasmania will be flexible and responsive to emerging needs within the community – particularly as identified by congregations and faith communities.

4.6 Strengths

By 2020 a new range of strengths will have emerged in the life and practice of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart.

We will have become a community marked by our commitment to flexibility and creativity. We will have many stories of innovation from our recent history, some of which have been "success" stories, others not. We will have demonstrated a willingness to learn from our stories and experiences, but not to let failure prevent us from continuing to innovate. Our polity (that is the weaving together of our church culture and our organisational structure) and our policies, together with our responsibilities and relationships, will have developed into forms that permit and encourage flexibility.

We will be a Christian community marked by the marriage of tradition with contemporary practice. We will be well aware of the changing cultural context within which we live, and will be following Jesus in ways that are new and creative, but rooted in the tradition and history we share.

We will be a community committed to justice and service for the disadvantaged. Our actions will be matched by our words, and our advocacy will invite others to join us in seeking justice, peace and reconciliation. Our commitment to justice and service will be based on our commitment to following the way of Jesus, a way that is sometimes unknown in our world today.

We will have developed a widespread and deep theological and biblical knowledge, grounded not in the capacity to proof-text, but to understand, interpret and grapple with the deep themes of scripture. We will be a people capable of theological reflection, seeking to understand the spirit of God at work among us.

4.7 Challenges

A number of new challenges will emerge for us in the years between now and 2020.

An aging population both within the church community and beyond will be a significant factor. We may continue to shrink numerically, and while efforts to engage a new generation and to nurture a new generation of leaders will begin to bear fruit, many of us will still be well into our retirement years. Overcoming the cultural barriers between different generations will be a constant challenge to us between now and 2020.

We face the challenge of developing the capacity to sustain a network of faith communities and congregations, each of which may look considerably different from the other, and from that to which we are accustomed. Supporting a variety of leadership styles, community structures, practices and priorities will require us to wrestle with organizational structures, resources, and the very question "what should church look like?"

Primarily we must overcome our tendency to revert to a reactive, protective nature. This challenge is not unique to the Uniting Church, or to our congregations, faith communities and agencies in greater Hobart. Nonetheless we will be constantly tempted to focus on survival, habit and assets, protecting what we have known as the Uniting Church.

4.8 Public Voice

The Uniting Church in greater Hobart will, in 2020, take its public role much more seriously. We will be 'uniting' in our practices, creating dialogue and co-operation between faith communities, both Christian and non-Christian, and in public debates in the wider community.

In particular giving voice in advocacy, undertaking public theology, hosting and participating in spiritual conversations will be regular areas of attention. We will prioritise giving voice to the gospel in ways that invite others into conversation.

Effective relationships with government will be developed through agency and leadership, but not to the point that our capacity and willingness to critique community values and public leadership according to the gospel are compromised.

The tasks of public voice, advocacy and action will belong to the whole people of God: councils of the church, congregations, a reinvigorated leadership community, agencies and, where appropriate those designated to speak on behalf of the Uniting Church in Tasmania. Achieving this balanced approach will have required careful negotiation of policy and polity within the Uniting Church in Australia.

5. Navigating the Journey Toward The Vision

The journey from 2010 to 2020 will be long and potentially difficult. It will also be exciting, presenting us with numerous opportunities to grow individually and collectively as we seek to understand and participate in the mission of God throughout the region. Without plotting a route-map for the next ten years, we believe some broad themes will shape our journey together. We identify a number of these themes that could emerge now, soon and later.

5.1 Now

Our need to resource leadership development is urgent and must begin at once. Putting in place a concerted approach to identifying, developing and releasing new leaders is a task that should be underway in 2010. Partnership and resourcing from the presbytery of Tasmania is essential.

We need to begin nurturing a capacity among our congregations and faith communities to engage in faith sharing. The use of contemporary resources, together with a focus during worship gatherings can re-invigorate our willingness to tell our own faith stories, and to invite the telling of faith stories from others.

We must begin the difficult task of nurturing innovation. Supporting existing innovative groups and activities such as BELLS, Sanctuary, Lacuna and Beyond Faith, learning carefully from their experiences, sharing those stories widely across the region and encouraging continued imagination and innovation in other congregations are crucial.

The emerging partnership in the northern suburbs between New Norfolk, Bridgewater-Gagebrook, Claremont-Bagdad and Glenorchy should be a priority. The placement of intentional ministry, working in collaboration across the sub-region is vital. The support and encouragement of congregations from other parts of the city will bear much fruit in this fledgling venture.

We should continue to meet, work and worship together as a whole church in the region at least two or three times a year.

5.2 Soon

We should re-imagine the way we approach the development of biblical and theological literacy. Christian education in the 21st century must combine education with inquiry, debate, and conversation, thus enhancing our capacity to theologically reflect and to participate in ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue. These are all tasks for the years ahead. Working collaboratively across congregations will enable us to maximise the efficient use of our resources in this area.

We should undertake a comprehensive property survey across the region, ensuring that we have a clear and accurate picture of the state of our property resource. Twenty year maintenance plans, consideration of budgeting requirements, exploration of heritage implications, and the needs of congregations and of host communities should be part of this survey. External partnerships, including for cultural, commercial or recreational objectives, may be effective in developing changed usage of properties, consistent with faith expression and outreach.

There should be an ongoing focus on collaborative relationships between congregations in different parts of the region. Common interest or common issue groups, shared approaches to worship, mission and education are all possibilities. In particular the five central congregations

of Hobart North, Wesley "In the City", Scots Memorial, Sandy Bay and Cheil Korean must continue to strengthen their relationship, and collaborative partnership in mission.

The congregations and faith communities of greater Hobart, together with the Presbytery should begin to explore seriously the concept of regional collegiate ministry. Placements could be made to the region rather than individual congregation, and attention given to developing an intentional multi-disciplinary ministry team across the region. Placements made during 2010 and beyond should all include mention of the potentially changing landscape for ministry placement in the region.

5.3 Later

Redevelopment of city-centre property and presence will emerge from closer cooperation between central congregations, faith communities and other common interest groups. The social, political and economic redevelopment of the city centre will change the ways in which the presence and life of the church is important to the city.

A continued commitment to innovation and experiment will result in the launch of at least one new experimental venture every year from 2012 and beyond. Monitoring and supporting these ventures will be a task requiring careful thought from congregations, and the regional ministry team.

Serious consideration should be given to establishing suburban "hubs" at the centre of networks of faith communities and congregations. Some property redevelopment is likely, with new or redeveloped facilities being intentionally multi-purpose community and resource centres, while retaining the important facets of sacred space.

6. The "Business as Usual" Option

An alternative to pursuing the vision described in Section Four of this paper is for the Uniting Church in greater Hobart to attempt to continue as it currently is. This is the 'do what we are already doing' option. In terms of congregational life and priorities, this means continuing to operate as individual congregations and faith communities, largely independent from one another.

If we believe that our current practice in terms of approaches to worship and discipleship, use of resources such as ministry workers or physical property are effective means of participating in the mission of God in our communities, then we may opt to continue as we are.

It is important to recognise however, that even to *attempt* to remain as we are will involve significant change. Ageing population, declining attendance, changing community values and lack of interest in the church from outside our walls demand that even to remain stationary in terms of the numbers and identity of congregations, members and activities, much must change.

The *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group does not believe that continuing as we are is a responsible choice. We believe that making this choice has very real consequences for our future together, and that these consequences will emerge quite quickly.

It is the view of the Task Force that if we choose to continue as we are then within 10-15 years the majority of our congregations will at the least be forced to consider amalgamation and many will close. Specifically we have real concerns about the capacity for survival of the congregations at Taroona, Sandy Bay, Scots Memorial, Wesley "In the City", Glenorchy, Claremont-Bagdad, Sorell, Lindisfarne, New Norfolk and Bridgewater-Gagebrook beyond the next decade. The financial resources and, equally importantly, leadership resources at hand will quickly become inadequate for the task of continuing on our present course.

This view is formed on the basis of our age profile, current trends and past history, and characteristics of the church identified through tools such as the National Church Life Survey.

The result of choosing to continue as we are may be that the Uniting Church in greater Hobart ultimately consists of Uniting Aged Care, Uniting Care Tasmania, Congress Tasmania and congregations at Kingston, Bellerive, Hobart North and Cheil Korean.

In terms of properties, we would anticipate most of the congregational property from closed or merged congregations will eventually be sold. Most would in any case either be an unsustainable financial burden to maintain, or unsuited to any emerging opportunities. A central city site (either Scots Memorial or Wesley) may be retained but will probably have a very small remnant congregation or none at all. Proceeds from sale of properties which are no longer required as congregations close or merge, would be needed to maintain other buildings, as has been past practice.

We anticipate that the number of ministry workers available to resource the church in greater Hobart will continue to shrink as financial resources dictate. By 2020 we may be in a position to support just three or four full time congregational ministry workers engaged across the city. This compares with more than 10 full time equivalent positions in 2010.

The most important issues facing us will be pastoral care, managing loss and grief, and careful management of finances and property to enable us to continue for as long as possible. It is likely that we will not leave much of a legacy behind as we use up all our available resources to attempt our own survival.

We believe that the loss and decline evident in our collective life indicate that we are not living as a missional church. We have for some time been focussed inwardly, on our own survival, on ministering to our own flock and without giving sufficient attention, resources and support to work beyond our borders. It is for these reasons that we believe choosing to continue as we are will lead inevitably to continued decline.

We do not like the bleak future we have painted here nor think it a responsible choice, but believe it is what lies before us should we attempt to continue, unwilling to face the challenge of change. Naming and responding to this possible future reality is important for all of us.

We observe that this possible future is also the null option. If the Uniting Church in greater Hobart cannot determine how to respond to the challenges it faces, or whether to pursue any alternate vision for its future at all, it is by default choosing to pursue business as usual.

Finally, we observe that not all congregations, faith communities or agencies of the church may wish to engage with the issues raised in this Report, nor to commit to particular courses of action in response to it. While we believe that every effort ought to be made to ensure wide consultation and agreement, we believe the future of the church is in such jeopardy that groups unable to reach consensus should not unreasonably delay the action of those who will commit to responding together. Potentially painful as this approach may be, we believe the health and future of the church in greater Hobart depends on our willingness to move imaginatively and immediately in our response to the spirit of God.

7. Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 Process for 2010

The Task Group believe that it is important that we carefully consider our responses to this report, and the opportunities and challenges raised within it. We believe that supporting an effective process to do so, and nurturing the capacity to make good decisions about how to respond, will take significant time and resourcing.

The following process will allow careful consideration of the Report by the Uniting Church in greater Hobart, and a greater likelihood of reaching decisions to which all can be committed.

Receive – February-April 2010:

- Presbytery of Tasmania receives the report of the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group and responds to the recommendations it contains
- Presbytery appoints a Project Facilitator to support the project throughout 2010
- The vision elements, opportunities and challenges identified in the report, together with the decision and recommendations of Presbytery are shared with congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart
- A series of workshops exploring the findings and implications of the 2009 Local Church Life Survey are conducted throughout the region

Respond – May- 2010 – November 2010

- Congregations, faith communities and agencies are invited to develop individual and collective responses to the Report
- Project facilitator, together with Presbytery staff offer substantial resourcing and support to congregations via ministry workers, lay leaders and church councils during this period
- Responses may include theological reflection, practical and theoretical responses to the Report, and commitments that will be made to the Uniting Church in greater Hobart of 2010, and of 2020.
- Project facilitator collects and compiles responses to the Report into a preliminary / draft Implementation Plan
- Preliminary Draft Implementation Plan is distributed to congregations, faith communities and agencies for comment
- Project facilitator collates responses and reworks preliminary draft into final Implementation Plan

Commit – February- 2011 – May 2011:

- Implementation Plan is presented to Presbytery, and to congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart
- Implementation plan is launched at city-wide gathering in May 2011

Implement – May 2011 & beyond:

- Congregations, faith communities, agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart, together with the Presbytery of Tasmania, implement the commitments and practices identified in the Implementation Plan

7.1 Project Facilitator & Presbytery Staff Resourcing

A Project Facilitator should be appointed and appropriately resourced by Presbytery to lead the implementation process. The Facilitator should be empowered with the capacity to draw together a multi-disciplinary team to assist the Uniting Church in greater Hobart through this process.

The Presbytery is encouraged to endorse the actions of the Presbytery Standing Committee in allocating significant resources to supporting the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* process throughout

2010 and 2011. Approximately half of the time of the Presbytery Minister, Mission Development is available to this task in 2010, with significant contributions from Presbytery Minister, Leadership Development, Synod Liaison Minister and other Presbytery committees, staff and officers as required. This project has been identified as a high priority by Presbytery Standing Committee and will be resourced as such.

The identity and skills of the Facilitator are of vital importance to the process. Necessary skills and characteristics include the capacity to:

- relate to and resource congregational leadership teams
- relate to and resource ministry workers
- relate to and resource agencies of the Uniting Church
- work with presbytery staff to provide the necessary resources
- reflect theologically
- develop educational resources
- develop worship resources
- facilitate organisational change in a diverse and complex organisation
- imagine and commit to the distinctive future of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart

8. Recommendations

8.1 Recommendations to Presbytery

The *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group makes the following recommendations to the Presbytery of Tasmania for consideration at its February 2010 meeting.

That the presbytery of Tasmania:

- a. receives *"How then shall we live"* as the report of the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group
- b. adopts and endorses the vision statements in Section 4 as being representative of the shape it hopes the Uniting Church in greater Hobart will develop over the next 10 years
- c. requests the Standing Committee to identify and access appropriate funding sources for the Implementation process including remuneration for the Facilitator
- d. commends *How then shall we live* to the congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in the greater Hobart region
- e. asks the congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart to respond to the report individually and collectively by 30 September 2010
- f. asks its Resource and Development, and Pastoral Relations Committees to consider and respond to the opportunities and issues raised in the report by 30 September 2010
- g. appoints a Project Facilitator to coordinate the sharing of the report, resourcing of discussion, and compilation of the implementation plan for *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020*
- h. asks the Project Facilitator to report back to Presbytery in May 2011 with an implementation plan based on the responses and commitments of the congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart
- i. commits the staff, officers and committees of the Presbytery to support and resource congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart together with the Project Facilitator as they seek to develop responses to the Report
- j. asks the Project Facilitator to liaise with Presbytery Standing Committee should the appointment of a project team become necessary

- k. thanks Prof. David Green, and the members of the *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group for their diligent work during 2009 and 2010, and discharges the task group

8.2 Encouragement to the Uniting Church in greater Hobart

While this report was commissioned by the Presbytery of Tasmania it ultimately belongs to the Uniting Church in greater Hobart. The *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group offers this report to the congregations, faith communities and agencies of the Uniting Church in greater Hobart. It is our hope that in it you will find elements of a vision for the future which both excites and challenges you.

We invite you to intentionally encounter the Report, and the vision described within it and to consider the shape you imagine might emerge for us over the next ten years. In particular we invite you to enter into a process of discernment and response, seeking to understand God's call to your congregation, agency or faith community both individually, and in partnership with your neighbours.

The Project Facilitator, together with presbytery staff will be available to work with and resource your encounter with the report, and to draw together a city-wide response by late 2010 as we consider the central question "*How then shall we live?*"

We look forward to being a part of your future as you seek ways to worship, witness and serve God in greater Hobart. We encourage ministry workers, church councils and agency boards to seek opportunities to share in God's mission collectively and separately.

We pray that you will explore, in fresh ways, what it means to be the Uniting Church in the 21st century and that you will know the presence of God and the support of the Presbytery as you journey together exploring and responding to this report.

Appendix A: Missional Questions

We present a number of possibilities and questions to be explored by the Uniting Church in greater Hobart over the next 10 years. We wonder what might emerge if we engage in these questions.

1. What does it mean for us to understand ourselves as participants in a broad spiritual conversation, rather than the keepers of the truth?
2. What provision is there for the concept of the Church as a participant & commentator, alternative visionary and risky innovator with respect to economic-commercial and politico-social fabric of the city?
3. What is the spirit of God doing in the growth areas around Hobart? In Brighton? Sorell? Kingston? How might we engage the families moving into these areas? How might we participate with local councils in developing community capacity and characteristics?
4. What is the spirit of God doing among migrant and ethnic communities of Hobart? How might Uniting Church congregations explore spirituality with ethnic communities? How might we partner together to support and sustain multi-cultural Christian faith communities?
5. How is the spirit at work among the student population of Hobart? How might we be at work in conversations around spirituality, sustainability, environment, and ethics with student groups?
6. What are we learning through the actions of UnitingCare Tasmania about the needs of young families in greater Hobart? How might we understand God's call to us to resource young families?
7. In a city with an ageing population, how might Uniting Aged Care and the Uniting Church participate in God's mission among the elderly?
8. With the city centre characterised by commerce, tourism, political power and a growing concern over safety of young people, how might we build upon the city centre facilities and communities we already have to be at mission in the centre of Hobart? What Hobart planning policies are in place and what is likely to emerge as a result of that?
9. How might the Uniting Church in greater Hobart be a body that acts to resource and sustain mission outside its own region? In the rural communities of Tasmania? In other provincial centres? Beyond our shores? Interaction with Synod Justice & International Mission unit, Frontier Services, Presbytery of Tasmania, Uniting World
10. How might we understand and explore relationship with other faith communities, including christian and non-christian faiths?

Appendix B: Local Church Life Survey 2009

The Local Church Life Survey was conducted during October 2009 as part of the Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 project. Results from the 413 responses to the survey reveal that there are five major elements of a vital, missional church worthy of further attention for the Uniting Church in greater Hobart. These are: vision, innovation, mission and worship. Leadership is a common element to each of these other four.

1. Leadership

The survey reveals a practical and pragmatic practice of leadership. The focus is maintaining order and stability. Leaders are responsible for getting things done in an honest and harmonious manner. Two of every three people surveyed were leaders. Most people have a general level of trust in leaders. There is some frustration with leaders' consultation, listening, communication and delivery of planned initiatives. There is little evidence of leaders being expected to bring about change, or to initiate actions that make real an agreed vision. Leadership activities appear to be mostly focused on the internal worship, administration and care of the Church. Service, alliances with other organizations of similar values or purpose, faith sharing and innovation towards new initiatives occupies relatively little of leaders' time and energies. Leaders are expected to contribute positively to members' personal satisfaction with 'church'. A fresh understanding of leadership is required, one that gets to grips with the church's nature and vocation; leadership that innovates and initiates, inspires and empowers.

2. Vision

The Church expects more of what it has valued in the recent past to constitute the major part of its vision for the future. Relatively few people know and are thoroughly committed to a particular or specific vision for their congregation or Church in the region. There is an unstated 'default' position that the Church will sustain congregations, ministry, services and programs reflecting past commitments. While there is a reasonable level of personal altruism, this does not extend to developing sustainable organizations for community service, care and peace-making. The majority of attendees expect any vision that might be current to be fulfilled. They express confidence in leaders to deliver this reality, even if they are uncertain as to the vision's details. There is little evidence in the survey of strong connections to neighbourhoods where congregations gather or have properties. However, anecdotal data suggests local initiatives are present, multiplying and developing. The age profile of the Church in greater Hobart continues that of previous NCLS reports. The decline in membership reflects deaths of the oldest age cohort. Growth by new member additions from among neighbourhoods mainly reflects 'migrant joiners'. Fluidity between congregations evidenced by switchers between 2006 and 2009 (24%) suggests a yearning for particularity in vision. Equally, switching may suggest a remarkable similarity of culture and general vision within each congregation. 'New Christian' joining represents less than one person per year per congregation. Clearly, there are difficulties in gaining shared vision. Each congregation is acting alone with respect to vision and vocation. There is a need to discern the Spirit's vocation for the Church in the region.

3. Innovation

Several factors have combined to strengthen concern about the Church's capacity for innovation. These include ministry worker and placement attrition, a sense of urgency about sustainability, and an inward focus. A trend towards individualization of faith, belief, belonging and Christian practice probably exacerbates the difficulties associated with collective innovation. Hence there is frustration with the perceived listening and communication capacities of leaders, as well as with the likelihood of bringing about change that really makes a difference. There are generational traits that have become factors impeding innovation. These factors are in keeping with Australians' preferred values of order, honesty and harmony. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that concern for the well-being of others, combined with a desire to enhance one's own understanding and role in society can combine to create new initiatives. (*For example: the No Bucks café.*) Altruism can arise from the ashes of self-centeredness given adequate attention to teaching, pastoral care, vision and building relationships between neighbours and church members. In such cases alliances with other people and organizations not formally a part of the church seem to be of singular importance. The gospel must be heard, studied and

understood in the context where it is proclaimed, and in ways that speak to as well as through cultures. This means paying attention to life experiences, making sense of them in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only when we do so can we discern the Spirit's compassionate and re-creative life amongst us.

4. Service or mission

There is a sustained trend since NCLS 2001 from collective, sustained, proactive commitments towards individual, casual reactive commitments. Personal altruism is evident and commendable, but the decline of collective altruism over a decade is marked. Generational traits might assist an explanation. However, there is a noticeable disconnection between the perceived vocation of the church and the services reported. There is work to be done on inquiring deeply into the radical 'resident aliens' nature of the Church, followed by a fresh discerning of the church's vocation. What will it mean to 'walk worthy of our calling' in greater Hobart in 2020?

5. Spirituality and worship

More strongly evident than in previous NCLS surveys is the impact of an individualised Christian spirituality. A significant number of people are dissatisfied with the connection between their personal Christian spirituality and corporate worship. This is more than a concern about corporate worship being 'contemporary' or of a particular or desired 'style' to worship. It is a deeper, more substantive issue than a question of tastes in music, liturgy or rituals. It is about developing worship into a corporate and public act directed beyond oneself, an experience where the transcendent breaks through, touching human existence in life changing ways. At the heart of this issue is the experience of awe and mystery. There is a deep yearning, only partially glimpsed in this survey report, for a deep and soul nourishing Christian spirituality that is at once personal and private, yet also intensely corporate and public. There seems to be a suspicion that the Church is about more than social reform and community service, but a deep and abiding question as to how to access that deeper meaning and nourishment. In sharp contrast, preaching as an act of collective meaning-making fares very positively. Perhaps this is because here we are on safer and more certain cognitive ground. However, the question remains as to the actual influence of preaching on personal discipleship and collective Christian practice.

Conclusion

The LCLS Report is merely a signal of some of the factors which a vital, faith filled church might consider as critical to its well-being. The Report is not a plan for the future. Nor does it provide a conditional list of 'must do' items if there is to be a future. The Church is God's. The Church's future lies in its courage to at all times be radically and utterly faithful to God's calling and purpose. The LCLS report reveals both strengths to build on and issues to attend to. At the heart of any visioning for the future is the nature and purpose of the Church. Listening to the Spirit to discern God's vocation for the Church in greater Hobart is both critical and essential to imagining the UCA in Hobart by 2020. Only one decade separates the church of today from that of 2020. Do we have the courage to set in place those disciplines and practices that might be faith-filled responses to the call to God's mission in Hobart? Perhaps a another way to ask what will the UCA look like in Hobart by 2020 is to ask, 'what relationships, promises and commitments is God calling us to now, and what will be necessary for us to be faithful to God's calling'?

John A Emmett
Jan 12th, 2010

Appendix C: Strengths: Local Church Life Survey 2009

Greater Hobart Local Church Life Survey Strengths revealed for further development

John A Emmett,
Jan 15, 2010

Summary comments

The LCLS is essentially a strengths based survey. The Reports issued to each participating congregation and factored into the Greater Hobart report reveal strengths across nine core qualities. The core qualities are scored by quantitative means.

The NCLS philosophy is built on an understanding that every church or congregation will have core qualities to its life that are stronger, or more developed or fully present than others. By identifying these strengths and developing them further, the congregation will become a healthier, more vital church, increasingly effective in God's mission in its own context and cultures.

Five strengths revealed by the Greater Hobart LCLS to be present across UCA members can be further developed. These are:

1. expectations;
2. altruism;
3. vision;
4. vocation;
5. and formation.

1. Christians' expectations

The greater Hobart LCLS revealed that people in the 13 participating congregations expect to grow, enjoy visionary leaders, be encouraged in altruistic endeavours, participate in nurturing worship and be helped in making sense of their life experiences.

They imagine the church of the future as very similar to the church of the past.

Expectation itself is a strength on which to build. Skilful design of ministry will harness people's expectation, using it as a motivational focus.

Expectations include:

- *growth in the Christian faith* – through groups, study, listening to preaching, and participating in Christian service
- *attendance at and participation in gathered worship* - regularly, frequently, experiencing worship as inspiring and nourishing of personal spirituality
- *being cared for* - by ministry workers, others, and Uniting Church caring and / or aged-care services; having developed lasting friendships amongst

church members and church organizations

- *caring for others* - church members, members of their families, friends and neighbours
- *participating in acts of service* - with people and in response to causes beyond their immediate family, friends, congregation or even neighbourhood
- *welcoming newcomers* - into their congregations, making new friends and supporting them in their faith growth
- *having leaders who are visionary* - working to an agreed vision, attending to members views, listening to and adopting ideas and innovations suggested, and implementing these in a timely and positive manner
- *initiating new innovations*– from time to time, mostly focused on member benefits
- *ensuring that many people participate in discernment and decision making.*

Communication about any initiative should frequently and regularly reflect and reiterate these expectations. This creates and sustains

awareness of them, as well as demonstrating a willingness to respond positively and creatively to them.

2. An altruistic disposition

Growth in Christian faith and in the faith of Christ enhances the individual's sense of identity, contributes to self esteem, inspires and motivates. Faith grow is a primary contributor to the shift from self centeredness to being others centered.

UCA members are aware of other people within and beyond their congregations, responding to diverse opportunities to serve others. The majority of members respond to causes or issues that they become aware of. These might not be a formal element of the Church's caring services, advocacy, resistance or peace-making programs. There is a strong legacy of sustained participation in justice, peace-making and service programs of the Church.

The disposition to both personal and collective altruism provides a basis for developing deeper, more diverse and sustained service of others as practical expressions of Christian discipleship and normative Christian practice.

However, such activities can sometimes be seen as promoting membership of the Church or a way of seeking potential church 'joiners'. Altruism is not characteristic of a church seeking new members. That would be an expression of self-centeredness. Rather, altruistic Christians can be encouraged to connect with like minded people from other groups, organizations or sectors of society to bring about desired, positive change.

When people from various groups join to focus on a common or shared issue their influence and impact becomes significant. When Christians participate in wider, shared initiatives to address justice issues, advocacy, resistance or peace-making they have a natural setting in which to share their faith as the motivating and empowering factor of their lives. In such settings, persistent and faithful 'walking worthy of their calling' testifies to their truth nature as Christ's disciples.

Thus, we can expect new partners to join in conversations about service, justice and peace-making. Such conversations may lead to new alliances, friendships and natural faith sharing on many levels.

3. Guided by vision

UCA members value vision, even if that vision is an enhanced image of the past. The majority of members expect the vision to be fulfilled. Indeed, they are confident of the vision's fulfilment. Church leaders can do much to build on the foundational expectation of a guiding vision. While it might be a difficult task to secure a new vision different from those of the past, the valuing and expectation of vision that unifies, guides and inspires is an expectation worth exploiting.

'Without a vision the people perish', but what vision? That is the *critical* question.

Drawing on other strengths - such as an altruistic disposition, the desire for inspiration, and readiness to make sense of life experience in the light of the gospel and Christian tradition – it might be possible to develop links between individuals and groups yearning for innovation, opportunities for service, and deeper contextual exploration. When these are taken together as an integrated and dynamic conversation, they can contribute raw material to the initial stages of discerning a vision.

Vision is about intentionality, the capacity to 'see' and live an alternative scenario to the current reality as if that scenario is indeed a reality. Another term of intentionality is 'prolepsis'. This is the 'seeing' typical of prophets in biblical literature. Prolepsis is especially characteristic of Jesus' ministry. When the church images itself in the prophetic tradition it engages its capacity for imagination to 'see' a new and alternative Way.

Thus, in addition to valuing and expecting vision, the Church stands in a long history of prophetic tradition. Engaging conversations, inspiring teaching, contextual inquiry fuelled by a holy curiosity all contribute to developing new vision for greater Hobart. It will be a vision that includes the UCA as an essential energizing and contributing party.

The church's vision will be enthusiastically embraced by some, thoughtfully considered by others, held at arms length until evidence suggests it is the 'right' vision by a few and rejected outright by naysayers. Vision is not subject to communal consensus, but is the result of divinely inspired insight. It takes time for vision to 'grow' into and across a community. The underlying role of leaders is to

discern the vision, communicate the vision, lift up the vision and initiate the vision into reality.

4. Searching for vocation

The Presbytery identified several objectives for the task Group's work. These included questions about the conversations, relationships and activities of the Church in greater Hobart by 2020, such as:

- how will the Spirit of God be known and the people of God be supported and encouraged in faith?
- what will be the nature of our theological debate and spiritual practice?
- what will be the nature of our gatherings?
- will there be a distinctive voice for the UCA and if so, what will the Church speak about?

Each of these questions begs the issue of a vocation – knowing God's calling to particular people, relationships, places and issues.

UCA members combine an altruistic disposition with a 'get involved' spirit. Two of every three people surveyed identified themselves as leaders. Members expect to be involved as active participants.

While much of the involvement is likely to be about institutional administration, there is a legacy of practical activity directed by and from the church to the wider community.

It is possible to give shape and direction to 'getting involved' through attention to discerning the Spirit's calling in both personal and collective spheres of daily and neighbourhood life. This will mean that spiritual direction – personal and corporate – will become an essential element of Christian formation ministries.

Conversations and preaching will raise contextual, cultural and gospel matters, sometimes studying these at depth. Prayer and an open, Christ-like practice of hospitality will feature in personal and corporate Christian disciplines.

Building on the legacy of personal, private devotion, it is possible to give strong and sustained attention to mentoring individuals and coaching groups in Christian disciplines that ground a Christ-like disposition to neighbours and neighbourhoods.

Vocation can also call forth the entrepreneurial capacities of groups and congregations,

especially when they link with other community groups or organizations. These capacities might be directed to work on significant neighbourhood regional or global issues. The development of leaders, resources and programs through which issues or needs might be engaged calls on the entrepreneurial skills latent within congregations.

There will be conversations about ethics with respect to public behaviours, social policies, company and corporate activities, financial transactions and political endeavour.

There will be stories to tell and listen to; action to reflect on; fresh understanding of tradition and biblical material to engage with...

The focus of the Church's dialogue will move from the administration of ministry, property and finance to engaging with neighbours and neighbourhoods, forming working alliances with other groups and organization; eager and excited sharing of answered prayer.

There will be fresh attention to utilizing contemporary forms of communication, even recognizing that some aspects of church life can be 'virtual' while delivering greater effectiveness and resource use efficiencies.

There will be ongoing contextual studies to ensure the church members are properly and fully informed about their neighbourhood and neighbours, potential allies and partners, issues and injustices, conflicts and tensions.

There will be regular times of communal discernment when Christians meet to listen to the Spirit and to discover where God is already at work and hear God's calling to join in that work.

There will be centres for spirituality, not dependent on individual congregations but sustained by a regional resourcing and priority. Church members will be able to avail themselves of these centres so that, irrespective of congregational affiliation, a regional capacity to respond to various callings is uplifted.

Responding to the Spirit's callings to God's mission might mean that groups are established, carry out their program or activity, and disbanded.

Alternatively, sometimes a long term commitment may require members to join an organization – perhaps instigated by the Church or by a community body that shares similar values and goals.

The Church will invest in and give priority to more deliberate, fluid structures and fresh

expressions for ordering its community life so that its vocation can be appropriately engaged. This is radically different to ordering a polity to preserve a denomination!

5. Formation in faithfulness

The greater Hobart LCLS (2009) is inquiry into some of the core qualities that informs a 'global view' of Christian faithfulness.

The survey revealed 'faithfulness strengths' in terms of frequency and regularity of attendance; participation in study or growth promoting groups; attention to (some) devotional disciplines; participation in care and service activities, and expectations reflecting positive Christian values.

There is a foundation on which build a fresh formation of a *faithful*, Christ-centred community. Such a community is given to persistently expressing its commitment to Jesus Christ. As such, it is a 'missional church' by definition.

This concept of Christian vocation is aligned to St Paul's concept of 'walking worthy of the calling to which we are called' or leading a life. It is about a holistic understanding of a Way of Life, and is grounded in the example of Jesus. It is "*about demonstrating to a watching world what the in-breaking of God's reign is really all about*".

(Stephen E. Fowl, quoted by Darrel Guder in *Walking Worthily*, *The Princeton Theological Seminary Bulletin*, Vol XXV111, No. 3, New Series 2007.

For the 'walking worthy' passages, see Ephesians 2:10; 4:1-3; Philippians 1:27 and 2:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; Colossians 1:9-10 ...)

A missional congregation is a community that 'walks worthy' of the calling to which it has been called. This is a primary, biblical definition of 'faithfulness'.

Thus, the theological debate and spiritual; practice of the 2020 UCA Church will reflect sustained attention to forming people in the faith of Christ so that they may walk worthy of their calling.

This does represent a change of emphasis in both content and method. The content for Christian formation will be deeply informed at every point by the scriptures, rather than acquired patterns and traditions. The methods applied will be intensely relational in nature. The goal is formation, rather than knowledge, or compliance with an established orthodoxy of belief or religious practice.

Theological debate within the Church might reflect the tensions and conflict such debate can inflame. However, it is the story-telling, ethics, rituals and social patterns that emerge from attention to Christian formation that will reorientate the Church in both personal and corporate settings to a missional stance.

This means attention to spiritual direction, Christian formation, teaching, and pastoral ministry and leadership development for mentoring, coaching and supervision of these activities.

Mentoring, coaching, shared Christian praxis and experiment will be the focus of ministry workers' design for ministry that forms and enables individuals and groups for their vocation (mission or ministry) in the world. (See the *Basis of Union*, Paras 12, 13.)

Conclusion

There are strengths present across the members of the various congregations that compose the greater Hobart UCA. These strengths provide a foundation for developing skilfully designed and targeted ministries with the purpose of enabling the Church in Hobart of be a community that walks worthy of its calling.

However, while the strengths provide a foundation, current polity and logistical arrangements require recalibration so that:

- innovation and initiative receive the greater share of the available resources;
- leadership responds to passion,
- ideas and ferment receive priority consideration;
- personal and corporate formation in the faith of Christ is closely associated with vocation and consequent opportunities to serve and share faith.

The Presbytery must now consider approaches to ministry and opening up fresh expression of polity that will best suit the requirements of designing ministry and communities to build on the present strengths so that the UCA in Hobart 2020 is a truly missional church.

Appendix D: Imagine....

The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge, but imagination. Albert Einstein.

Below you will find a collection of stories that form part of how we imagine the Uniting Church in greater Hobart might develop over the next ten years. Some are specific to particular congregations, agencies or faith communities, some are not. Some are near term, grounded in initiatives already underway, some are not. We offer these imaginings not as a list of fixed objectives toward which we are working, but as a description of the kind of church we believe God is calling us to become.

Most of all however, we offer these imaginings as a means to stir the imagination within you. What do you *imagine* we might look like in 2020?

Imagine....*B.E.L.L.S. is a small faith community within the life of the Uniting Church in Australia within greater Hobart. Some people call it 'worship'. Others don't use that term, but describe it as a deeply spiritual encounter with God and fellow travellers on the faith journey.*

*The life of the group, together and apart, is shaped by the Christian practices named by the group's name: **B**less, **E**at, **L**isten, **L**earn, **S**ent. There are several B.E.L.L.S. groups in greater Hobart, at different times and locations, all of them centred around hospitality, a shared meal, and a deep experience of holy communion.*

Imagine....*Sanctuary is a mid-week, early evening space for quiet retreat and reflective worship. A small team of people plan for Sanctuary, and each evening is led by a facilitator and based around a different theme. Sanctuary is informal and invitational, the attendance relatively small and fluctuating. Seating is generally in a semi-circle fashion, with a visual focus in the centre.*

Sanctuary worship is contemplative in nature and includes spoken words, readings, poetry, prayers, played or sung music, visual imagery, silence, ritual and invitation for personal reflection. The time is generally short and afterwards, there is an opportunity for continued personal meditation, and a time of supper for those who wish.

Imagine....*one Uniting Church congregation, in growing as a missional community, is exploring the question "who are our communities?", and how this shapes our focus on living the way of Jesus.*

The focus is on encouraging and resourcing our people and groups to live the way of Jesus in the communities where we spend the majority of our week, as well as in the neighbourhood of our building.

Gatherings on Sundays, and small group life at other places and times are about 'equipping the saints for ministry and building up the body of Christ' in the communities around us. (Eph 4:12)

Imagine....*Covenant groups meet fortnightly, on a Saturday or Friday night in someone's home, sharing in a meal together. Each is a group of people committed to sharing, supporting and learning with and from each other in the context of their faith journey.*

Covenant groups are all ages and family situations - singles, couples and family groups. They enjoy sharing in a meal and conversation together, are stimulated by their seeking and learning,

find ways to include each other, are flexible and willing to try new ideas, share deeply with each other, and have fun together.

Imagine.... *Scot's Memorial church is the centre for an intentional and wonderful ministry to the city, including the Royal Hobart hospital. Residential units at a redeveloped Scots Memorial site provide supported space for families who need accommodation, and host a new monastic community that cares for the inner city community. Chaplaincy at the hospital is enabled and encouraged with chaplains using space at Scots for a variety of purposes.*

Scots has become a community that offers a pastoral care centre for the city.

A growing suite of family support initiatives complements the on-site childcare centre, supporting, equipping and encouraging the families of greater Hobart.

Imagine.... *Food for the Soul operates in the heart of the city centre. It provides courses and activities that meet people's needs: spiritually, environmentally, a place of gathering, worship in many varied ways. Food for the Soul is hosted from a city centre site that meets the needs of those who work in the city, gather in the city and come to the city.*

Beyond that, it resources activities, courses and worship in the suburbs and beyond.

Food for the Soul provides different kinds of resources: different worship types, progressive Christianity studies and workshops, courses in resilience, self care, community building and individual strength based activities, parenting, aging, grief, retirement planning, work home tensions, environment stewardship and living justly to mention a few.

Food for the Soul is a community that networks with others providing services and becomes a hub known for building people up and equipping and resourcing people for life

Imagine.... *a network of new faith communities meeting at a variety of times and with a variety of foci. These faith communities gather different age groups and interest groups and meet particular interests: theological, worship styles and group needs. They include young families, young adults, BELLS, Taize style, social action focus.*

We have achieved this in part by providing resources that free up leadership to focus on developing these faith communities.

Many participants are former UCA people who have either left or eased their way out of the church – many are deeply spiritual people and are yearning for a way in which they can engage and explore their relationship with God. Some have tried other churches, some have not. This vast 'Diaspora' find the existing offering the church provides unfulfilling but have reconnected through this network of faith communities

Imagine.... *a different approach by the Church to ordained ministry in greater Hobart has developed. A regional minister leads a team of ministers, each bringing particular strengths to the team, and all of whom are available to the various congregations & faith communities in greater Hobart.*

The ministry team has been called by the Presbytery and placed to the congregations of the Greater Hobart Uniting Church. The team resources each congregation's ministries, developed by particular groups of people, so that God's mission continues to be inspired and effective.

For example, one of the ministry team members has particular gifts in spiritual direction. The minister is mentoring individuals and small groups in personal Christian spiritual disciplines and various practices of Christian faith.

Strengthened in Christian faith, members of the Church are engaging in conversations with others about their experiences of faith. They are acutely aware of the Holy Spirit's calls to God's mission. Prayer gatherings have increased. New people join practical mission activities such as the emergency food and material aid programs. Christians are participating with confidence and respect of others in inter-faith conversations with new arrivals to Hobart.

***Imagine....** Bridgewater-Gagebrook UC is evolved into a unique and highly visible Mission consisting of a number of faith communities addressing the need of specific groups within the municipality. The Mission is strong on advocacy, strong on hospitality and nurture, a refuge and a safe place, strong on meeting need. It is focussed on witnessing Jesus Christ in new ways.*

The mission is a greater Hobart initiative supported by many faith communities.

It has, with the support of other congregations in the northern suburbs spread its ministry to the entire municipality, particularly the growth area of Brighton where a new faith community meets weekly.

The ministry remains closely integrated with the greatly expanded community service of UnitingCare at Bridgewater Gagebrook, and throughout the southern Tasmania region.

Imagine.... the Korean Chiel Congregation has an all-age membership with a strong youth component including secondary and University students. Music, dance and drama are used in worship and fellowship.

The congregation includes an increasing English-speaking expression making it truly multi-cultural. Young people with a variety of cultural backgrounds participate together in energetic Sunday evening gatherings (English speaking), with emphasis on social, topical, environmental/global, cross-cultural issues addressed by invited speakers.

There is a strong emphasis on welcome, hospitality and inclusion of overseas students and migrants in the Sandy Bay area. The community pursue partnerships with University-based Christian groups.

This community has emerged from an increasing commitment to shared ministry and use of resources by the two congregations using the Sandy Bay properties in 2010.

***Imagine....** A Greater Hobart Church Council provides direction and leadership, as well as providing strong connections between the various congregations and faith communities of the region. The ministry team attends to the various issues arising from new arrangements such as building a sense of belonging, generating new ways to meet and mix with new people, raising fresh initiatives for pastoral visitation and care of members, and assisting lay ministry teams to craft and lead enthusing and creative worship.*

The ministry Team, guided by the Greater Hobart Church Council and the Regional Minister, develop mission connections and shared activities with other churches and organisations across the city.

What can you imagine....?

Appendix E: Time of Listening

The Task group undertook to listen carefully to members and constituents of the Uniting Church across greater Hobart and so undertook 14 *Time of Listening* conversations across the city during 2009. Over 100 people, including members of congregations, ministry workers, lay leaders and representatives of Uniting Care and Uniting Aged Care participated.

The purpose of the *Time of Listening* was to assist the task group in its goals of seeking to understand the major priorities for the church, identifying significant obstacles to those priorities, and understanding something of the way in which the Uniting Church sees itself both now and in the years toward and beyond 2020. The Task Group, upon distilling the conversations, heard nine clear themes emerge:

Spirituality: there is a spiritual hunger evident in the wider community. How do we participate in those spiritual conversations?

Leadership & Initiative: it is crucially important to develop leaders, and to re-think the way in which ordained ministry workers are utilised by the church

Flexibility & Mobility: we must find ways to be in the right places, at the right times, and with the right resources available for the tasks at hand

Service & Presence: a continued commitment to, and service for groups within our community such as elderly, poor, children, young people, families, disabled, indigenous.

Incarnation & innovation: flexibility and the exercise of hospitality (including celebration, inclusion and safety) are a very important aspect of a distinctive presence. We must be among the people

Partnerships: a seeking for and commitment to partnerships of common purpose in community service and social justice—'Uniting' in action

Communication, dialogue, learning: much stronger focus needed on communication – including emerging technologies – and on understanding each other in an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-faith community

Buildings & property: our buildings are both a blessing and a burden to us. How can we use these assets more effectively and efficiently?

Ethics in Society: there is concern in the wider community about ethical behaviours in business, politics, environment issues, health delivery, sport and the roles of the churches as exemplars and custodians of ethical standards.

The *Time of Listening* revealed a strong desire for the Uniting Church to continue, and a clear sense that there is a place for a distinctive Uniting Church presence and voice. The Uniting Church in greater Hobart, through the *Time of Listening* spoke of four key elements to this presence:

- A sense of acceptance, openness and inquiry in a pilgrim, journeying church;
- A commitment to social justice and social welfare, including increasing understanding of, integrity in and commitment to environmental issues;
- The importance of biblical and theological scholarship in the contemporary context;
- An understanding of the importance of our heritage, including both our *Basis of Union* as an *ongoing* vision, and our buildings and properties as gifts and assets to *adapt to* emerging opportunities.