



CANBERRA CENTRAL PARISH

Planning Day Report 2007

The Parish Planning Morning on October 20th gathered 48 people, representing St Aidan's, and the Wesley 9.00am and 10.30am worship communities. The day was led by Peter Walker. We began with devotions based on Mark 4: 26-34 and the theme "From little things big things grow". Sitting and working in table groups as well as open sessions we discussed the highlights and concerns of the last year, and looked ahead to priorities for the year to come.

1. HIGHLIGHTS OVER THE LAST YEAR

Welcoming many newcomers, the financial generosity of our people and the launch of the Bequest Program, more children involved in our community, significant wider mission & service commitments, bush dance, interesting visiting Preachers/speakers, the continued strength of Music Ministry / Music Centre + our wonderful Scholars, Ecological awareness + study programs, Ministry leadership (esp. during Gregor's absence), support for Gregor, Wylie Street Manse kitchen damaged but replaced, collegiate strength of our Ministry team, we now have three of our members preparing for Ministry in the UCA, 30th Anniversary of UCA celebrations, diversity encouraged, Children's courtyard is splendid, St Aidan's Faith Conversations, St Aidan's organists are faithful and greatly appreciated, St Aidan's guttering done!, Lay Preachers, Mission Teams up and running, Thursday Friendship Group, Intercessory Service on Thursdays, the Property Manager's work, Foyer well used, Gunning concert, Niki + children & wider work, second tennis court is resurfaced, Fete & Garage Sale, St Aidan's Day Service & Good Friday special worship experience, Sunday afternoon studies, Confirmation Services, meaningful worship – at special and ordinary time.

2. CONCERNS AND POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES

Our congregations are aging and there is a 'gap' in the 15-50 year age group – How can we address this? We are blessed to have so many people visiting Wesley (in particular) for worship and many are welcomed each year – How can we help create a greater sense of belonging for new and long-standing members alike? Our Home Fellowship Groups are vital and a point of pastoral support and faith development – How can we refresh existing groups and start some new ones? Property maintenance is a vast area of ongoing expense and people-time.

3. IDEAS FOR THE COMING YEAR – FOR REFERRAL TO MINISTERS, MISSION TEAMS, JOINT CHURCH COUNCIL, AND ELDERS *FOR ACTION!!*

A number of helpful suggestions were raised and 'workshopped' in table groups and the open meeting. Nicky Mowbray made a presentation on behalf of the 10:30am *Upper Room* group regarding their work on homelessness in the ACT and possible action in response by the churches. All ideas were voted on to ascertain which had the greatest support. Each idea will be referred to a relevant group (JCC, Mission Team, Elders and so on), and where a group does not exist to take responsibility for an idea further action will be taken by the Joint Church Council and Ministry team

The first cluster of ideas formed around the question: How can we create a stronger fellowship in which people can feel they belong?

- Refreshing our Home Fellowship Groups and aiming to start new groups
- Greater opportunities for community building within the parish – formal and informal (BBQ's, Bush dances, etc)
- Better communication about the role of Elders within the Uniting Church and our Parish, and seek energy and vision from Elders to build fellowship and connections within the parish
- Hold an annual 'Talent Harvest Festival Service' in which we recognise the many ways people offer their time and talents, within and beyond the parish, in the service of God
- Have a monthly 'mission focus' for our worship
- Develop activities / groups that are of interest to those who are 15-50 years (men's ' women's breakfasts, youth / young adult opportunities)
- Co-ordinated support for those we welcome as newcomers so they feel part of the heart of our life – opportunities for involvement
- Monitor why people come to us, and why they leave

A second cluster of ideas formed around the facilities at Wesley:

- extending opportunities for outreach via better use of our facilities
- conducting an energy and water audit of our properties
- Hospitality for the homeless, in co-operation with south-side Churches
- we have the facility to build an excellent network of communication via web-site and other electronic means
- The Wesley Community Centre may be a better way to describe the Wesley facilities and a helpful way of developing our mission – *Community centre*

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN PLANNING MORNING