



30 March 2017

Dear friends,

I am writing to update you on some key areas of progress relating to the implementation of resolutions from Synod 2016 and subsequent Synod Standing Committee (SSC) meetings, specifically those relating to the Strategic Framework and changes in Synod based ministries and operations.

A number of resources are now available to explore ways that the Synod's Vision and Mission Principles might invite discussion and focus in various gathered communities around the Church. The Vision and Mission Principles, Statements of Intent and strategic priorities are all part of the Strategic Framework adopted by the Synod that enables an intentional and coordinated focus on the mission of God. A 16 page booklet, *Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles*, provides information and exercises to help focus on God's mission. Information about this booklet, including a video from the Moderator, can be found [here](#). The same link provides downloadable PDFs of the Vision and Mission Principles in a variety of languages. These translations will continue to be produced during 2017. You can contact Rev David Withers (David.Withers2@victas.uca.org.au), Strategic Framework Minister, if you would like more information about these resources.

The reorganisation of Synod based ministries and operations resolved by the Synod will consist of four key areas – a Mission & Capacity Building Unit (working title), a Mission & Ministry Support Unit, a Mission Resourcing Unit, and the Office of the General Secretary. All of these units will be designed to better support the Church's focus on mission and seek to deepen trust, share resources and nurture a culture of innovation and renewal.

A significant proposal relating to the Mission & Capacity Building Unit (working title) was resolved at the SSC meeting held on Wednesday, 22 March. This relates to the high level functional areas of the new unit and its leadership.

The functional areas are designed to evolve and respond in ever-new and renewing ways over the coming years and engage relationally across the Synod. The functional areas focus on:

- Leadership, Education & Formation
- Relationships & Connections
- Functions & Administration
- Priorities, Focus & Advocacy



The Vision and Mission Principles and the Statements of Intent are central to the functions of the new unit. The unit's work will spark a focus on the strategic priorities approved by the Synod, namely:

- ministries which foster diverse gathered communities of renewal, Christian practice and mission;
- culturally diverse mission and ministry; and
- mission and ministry with children, youth, their families and young adults.

At its 22 March meeting, the SSC also approved the ministry description for the Executive Officer of the Mission & Capacity Building Unit. The role has responsibility for leading the unit's work in line with the strategic goals outlined in the Strategic Framework and as adopted by the Synod. This placement will be advertised in April *Crosslight* and nationally through other UCA networks. The Placements Committee is also giving consideration to this placement.

On Monday 27 March and this morning, I met with staff and people in placements who work in areas affected by the formation of the new Mission & Capacity Building Unit. These areas include the Centre for Theology and Ministry, the Commission for Mission, and staff who help resource BOMAR and the Placements Committee. I shared the details of the SSC's resolutions and invited questions and comments. Change can be unsettling for some people. We are providing pastoral support in a variety of ways and also an Employee Assistance Program for staff during these processes. The new Mission & Capacity Building Unit will be a significant opportunity to build the faithful and valuable resourcing for ministry and mission that is already being provided through many facets of the Synod. As plans for the unit unfold, it is also a time to be sensitive to those affected by the changes.

As we journey together through Lent and approach the season of Easter, I hope that your time during this period is one of thoughtful and prayerful reflection that helps to nourish your personal and Church's faith in following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Lawrence". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence
General Secretary