

**Berry Uniting Church Congregation**



**MISSION and MINISTRY PLAN  
2022-2027**

*"The Gospel of Christ, which means the good news of Christ, is given to tell us not what we already know but what we do not know. It is given not to tell us that we have failed, because we already know that about ourselves. That is not good news. It is given to tell us what we have forgotten, and that is who we are. Spirituality does not consist of being told what to do. It consists of being reminded of who we are. Only when we know who we are will we be clearer about what we should do."* (Rev Dr John Philip Newell)

**OUR VISION**

**We aspire to be PEOPLE WALKING WITH JESUS, SHARING GOD'S LOVE**

**OUR MISSION**

**We seek to SHARE GOOD NEWS THROUGH WELCOME, HOSPITALITY AND SERVICE TO ALL**

## **WHO ARE WE (our Culture & Values)**

We are a Congregation of the UCA within the Illawarra Presbytery. We have had a long history in the area which has come out of the Methodist Church. We remember and value our past and give thanks for those who have faithfully served this community of faith.

We are committed to faith and caring, and we seek to follow the example of Jesus' life in our being and doing. We believe that "Church" is the people not the building. We seek to be a welcoming and caring community of Christians who place a high value on all people.

Whilst we are an ageing group, with a diversity of understandings, knowledge, views and experiences, we are open to new things and we look forward hopefully to a new future.

We seek to be compassionate, tolerant, inclusive and accepting. We believe that there is a place for everyone at our table.

## **WHO ARE OUR NEIGHBOURS**

We believe that our neighbours are everyone who crosses our path and with whom we connect. Some of our neighbours live near to us and some visit our beautiful town, village and community from time to time.

Our neighbours are long-term residents, retirees, new families, weekend visitors, tourists, occupants of B&Bs and all who come to enjoy the facilities and amenities within our community. The residents of the 3 Retirement villages and the 2 Nursing homes are our neighbours.

Our neighbours are the people we already connect with through the Mens' Shed, the Library, Coffee and Friends group, Craft groups, Computer for Seniors group, #Stop the Shame, the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) as well as those who use our halls and facilities for activities in the community.

The First Peoples of the Yuin nation are our neighbours and call us to join them in valuing and respecting the land.

Berry is a "creative town" with a diversity of activities, which has become a destination of choice. We understand that Jesus' mission and ministry was to "outsiders" and we believe that so too is ours. We are called to be people who let Jesus shine through our "cracked lives".

We believe that developing and building relationships with all our neighbours is a crucial element in the renewal of mission

## **WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE & DO (What is GOD leading us to be/do)**

We believe we need to be "good neighbours" who build relationships first and foremost. We need to follow the call of Jesus to be "salt & light" in the community by being 'doers' not just 'talkers' as we share the good news that we have received. As Micah 6:8 says we are to "do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God".

In order to do this we need to be aware of what is happening in our community. We need to be as open as we can to those around us. We need to take up the challenge to engage with people through visiting and building relationships. To be prepared to be the "Good Samaritan" within our own community as we "go to" where people are rather than expecting them to come to us.

We need to consider how we might conduct an "evangelical outreach" program and help people to learn more about God and Christianity. In this we might consider ways in which we could teach and disciple people in nurturing their faith.

We need to commit ourselves to being dedicated to where God might be leading us and to seek for what it is that God wants us to be and do. In this seeking we should expect to be surprised by God. In order to do this we might consider developing small house groups which have "holy conversations" and which explore and study our Christian Scriptures and traditions.

We need to simply do the best we can and not be afraid of our own vulnerability and do all that we do with love and grace.

We need to be people who are trustworthy and reliable as we accept the challenges that will come to us to change with and openness and inclusivity.

As the people of God, we need to develop a greater awareness of the presence of the "sacred" and offer "sacred space" and "presence" to people within our community. We need to provide opportunities to engage in "spiritual formation"

## **Goal 1: To provide generous, intentional hospitality and welcoming inclusion to all**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Regularity</b>	<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Encourage and empower all members to practice “radical hospitality”	Encourage and empower all members to practice “radical hospitality”	A church community that is viewed with respect and affection	Ongoing	Regular items in Church newsletter	Minister  Church Council
Support “Coffee & Friends”	To provide the opportunity for social gathering  To offer times & a place of welcome & inclusion for the lonely & alone & new members of the community  To create opportunities for radical hospitality & relationship building	Connecting with people who need a place to sit and enjoy a chat in a social setting  Fewer members of the wider community suffering loneliness and isolation  More community members with stronger friendships and support networks	Weekly	Volunteers to set up and serve and for other volunteers to engage in conversation with attendees	???
Sausage Sizzle on Saturdays	To engage with people who visit Berry on Saturdays as they walk through Church parking area	Connect with people who live in and visit Berry on a Saturday in order to raise the profile of the Church as a place of hospitality and welcome	Once a fortnight on a Saturday morning	Volunteers to set up and cook and serve	???
Devonshire Teas in Wesley Centre to	To engage with people who came to	An alternative means of connecting with people who live in and visit Berry on a	Once a fortnight on a Saturday afternoon	Volunteers to set up and serve	???

connect with weekend tourists	Berry as weekend tourists	Saturday in order to raise the profile of the Church as a place of hospitality and welcome			
Hall Users Dinner	An opportunity for the Church to host a dinner for the users of the halls, as a way of getting to know and be known within the community as a place of caring and acceptance	A chance for the church to get to know the people who use the Halls.  Relationships are built between the Church and the people who use the Halls which may lead to better communication and the ability to provide care and support when needed	Once a year (at least)	Volunteers who will prepare and arrange the dinner	Janet Brentnall
Provide two meal based events during the year which give opportunities for the congregation to mix and share with members and partners of the Groups associated with the congregation	To provide a meal for people who are alone and in need of a social gathering	To raise the profile of the Church as a place of welcome and hospitality and to connect with people who are lonely or homeless	Once every two months	Volunteers to set up, cook and serve meal in a social setting in Church Hall	???
Use of Pizza Oven	To explore ways of using the pizza oven as a way of engaging with community	To use the newly built pizza oven as another way of connecting with the Berry community. To enhance the profile of the Church within the community and to	Once per month on a Friday evening	Volunteers to set up, cook and serve pizzas and to engage with people in a social setting	???

		provide an alternative “meal option”			
Have more regular gatherings over a meal	To build relationships founded on trust and acceptance	A church community that is trusting, loving and inter-dependent	Once every second month	Volunteers to provide meal &/or Members to ‘bring & share’ food for meals	All members
Ensure that all leaders of church based groups understand and put into practice the values of welcome and inclusion	To encourage all leaders to embrace an ethos of radical hospitality and acceptance	Group members who accept & trust the church community & value the hospitality & opportunities provided by the various groups	Twice a year at least	Regular items in Church newsletter	Minister  Church Council
Pursue “Covenant relationships” with and learn about local First Nations peoples  Communities (in consultation with UAICC)	Heighten awareness of local Indigenous culture, values & history  Become aware of Indigenous community social justice issues	A church community which is more sympathetic to Indigenous cultural issues  Support of Indigenous advocacy for improved health, education, employment and other outcomes	Ongoing	Develop relationships with local First People’s organisations and groups who can assist and advise	Andrew Watts  Julie Watts  David Millikan

**Goal 2: To provide educational, social justice, spiritual and recreational activities to in our community**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Regularity</b>	<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Support activities of RAR Shoalhaven - #StopTheShame	To advocate for justice for refugees & asylum seekers	Raise awareness of and need for action which addresses the issues and which	Ongoing	Regular items in Church newsletter	Minister  Church Council

	To raise funds for the support of refugees in Port Moresby, in hotel detention in Australia and in the community, living without government support.	raises funds to support programmes			All members
Support activities & campaigns of Uniting Advocacy	To build awareness in the congregation of the various issues that Uniting Advocacy is working on  To add our voice to the voices of other congregations and Uniting in seeking justice for the vulnerable and weak members of society	To be aware of the various issues raised by Uniting Advocacy and to be prepared to speak out and conduct actions which will address these issues	Ongoing	Regular items in Church newsletter  People who take responsibility to raise these issues at Shoalhaven Zone meetings and communicate with other congregations within the Presbytery	Minister  Church Council  Interested Members
Cooking Classes in kitchen in Hall	To engage with people in need of a place to mix with others and to learn to cook	To provide an opportunity for people interested in learning to cook a range of cuisines	Once every two months mid-week	Volunteers who will source people from TAFE and local restaurants who can teach cooking.	???
Hats for Homeless	To provide the opportunity for people to gather to loom beanies that will be distributed to rough-sleepers in areas of need by Hats for Homeless	To engage with people interested in looming beanies for Hats for Homeless	Once a week	Volunteers who will commit to leading the gathering of interested people and provide morning or afternoon tea	???
Conversations for Seekers	To provide an opportunity for "seekers" to meet and	Engage with people who are interested in discussing matters of	Once a month	Leaders and invited guest speakers who will lead	???

	discuss matters of faith and spirituality in a safe and welcoming environment	faith & spirituality in a safe and welcoming space. These could be people both within the Church community and others who do not yet attend regular worship in Berry		conversations that enable people to explore matters of faith and spirituality	
Seminars & Workshops	An opportunity for engaging people in the community around discussion of issues of social importance. An opportunity to raise the profile of the Church as a place where important topics are discussed and debated	To raise the profile of the Church as a community which seeks to be a catalyst for discussion of topics of importance.	Once a quarter	Leaders and invited guest speakers that will attract people to engage on topics of interest and importance	???
Spirituality/Religion in the Pub	Raising the profile of the Church as a community which steps outside the confines of the Church to allow people to discuss and debate matters of religion and spirituality in the local Pub	To be a community which engages with the community beyond the confines of the Church buildings	Once a month	Committed leaders and volunteers who will engage with the Publican for permission to run these sessions and who will commit to taking these discussions to the Pub	???
Bake-up days in kitchen for special occasions (such as ANZAC Day & Mothers' Day)	Provide the opportunity for providing cakes & biscuits etc for distribution as gifts on special days	To be seen as a Church which is committed to giving back to the community in generous and practical ways.	Two-three times per year	Volunteers who are able to cook and teach others to cook for these special day bake-ups and people who will distribute the baked goods within the community	???

### **Goal 3: To develop, nurture and enrich our Christian faith and spiritual life guided by the ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Regularity</b>	<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Worship Services & Preaching	Continue to develop worship and preaching which is hopeful and inspiring and which involves more Church members	Worship will be richer and more creative, and preaching will speak to the needs of modern society	Weekly on Sundays Possibly developing a mid-week Service	Volunteers willing to be involved with the Minister in the planning, preparation and leadership of Worship Services	Andrew Watts
Taizé Services	Provide an alternative style of worship which enables people to explore and deepen a sense of spirituality	The development of an alternative style of worship which enhances the spirituality of people interested in worshipping in the spirit of the Taizé community	Monthly	Volunteers willing to promote these services and to support the Brentnalls in the leadership of these services	John & Janet Brentall
Sensory Garden	Engage with Berry garden club to provide a space of beauty for peaceful meditation for people in the community to access for spiritual reflection	Provide a place of beauty and peace for use by people in the Church and others in the Berry community	Develop the sensory garden sometime in 2023	People interested in gardening, and who have connections to the Berry Garden Club, who will be willing to plan, prepare, plant and maintain a Sensory Garden	???
Labyrinth	Engage with Berry garden club and Men's Shed to develop a Labyrinth as a space for spiritual reflection that is	Provide a unique space for meditation in the ancient tradition of the Labyrinth	Develop a Labyrinth sometime in 2023	People who are interested in planning, preparing and laying out a Labyrinth.  Others who will promote and advertise	???

	accessible to anyone in the community, and which provides a place for days of reflection			the existence and purpose of a Labyrinth in Berry and invite its open use	
Basic Christianity classes/seminars	To teach both newcomers to faith and regular attendees to the Church about the basic tenants of the Christian faith	To deepen knowledge & understanding of the Christian Faith and discipleship	Run classes over 3-4 weeks twice a year	Develop the curriculum and advertise the classes	David Millikan
Berry "Spiritual Life" Space	Develop a local space that provides opportunities for mediation, retreat and contemplative prayer that will be a part of a South Coast network of similar places	To deepen faith and spirituality through Christian Mediation	Meet with other Meditation groups to explore the possibility of a Christian Meditation network.  Talk with Neil Millar (from Canberra BENEDICTUS) at the Presbytery Retreat in November	Volunteers to make this group happen and people who are willing and interested in participating	Andrew Watts
Support existing Bible Study group & facilitate new group(s)	To expand the opportunities for members of the Church to gather in house groups to study and discuss the Bible to develop small groups within the Church  To build the knowledge & understanding of the congregation & help people to deepen their faith	Extend community connections within the Church community and to increase the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Bible	Weekly or fortnightly.  Continue current Study groups and explore ways of getting other Church members involved in new groups	Discuss and plan ways of engaging as many people as possible in these small groups.  Appropriate resources for groups to use.	Andrew Watts  Church Council

Provide educational opportunities to learn about and discuss Theology, Church History, Biblical Studies & Philosophy	<p>To build the knowledge &amp; understanding of the congregation</p> <p>To provide opportunities for exploration and learning which deepen people's knowledge of theology, Church History, Biblical Studies and Philosophy</p>	To make the education of the seminary available to people who wish to learn more about the foundations of the Christian faith	<p>Quarterly.</p> <p>Use the Liturgical Year to frame educational opportunities.</p>	Educational resources which may be required for use in these groups.	<p>David Millikan</p> <p>Andrew Watts</p>
Facilitate training courses for the congregation and wider community such as Mental Health First Aid & Suicide Awareness;	<p>To build the knowledge &amp; understanding of the congregation &amp; community of these issues</p> <p>To train people to be competent in recognizing and responding to signs of mental ill health or suicide ideation.</p>	More community members able to recognise the symptoms of mental ill health & equipped to take appropriate action.	Ensure that all members are informed whenever these courses are advertised and available.	Appointment of an Education group (who will take responsibility for such training)	<p>Church Council</p> <p>Education Group in congregation</p>
Promote, encourage and facilitate congregation participation in training and educational short courses such as Living Our Values, the Sacraments, Lay Preaching and Safe Church workshops.	To build the knowledge & understanding of Uniting Church values and theology of the congregation & help people to deepen their faith	A church community which is more informed about the historical roots, ethos, polity and practises of the Uniting Church	Ensure that all members are informed whenever these courses are advertised and available.	Appointment of an Education group (who will take responsibility for such training)	<p>Church Council</p> <p>Education Group in congregation</p>

## **Goal 4: To explore, encourage and develop ways of connecting with our community**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Regularity</b>	<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Continue and seek to further expand the excellent community connections through the existing Library	<p>To build social capital in community</p> <p>To build relationships &amp; create opportunities to share the gospel</p> <p>To create relationships within which pastoral care may be offered</p>	More members of the church community attending the library and interacting with library users	Ongoing	Volunteers to staff and organise the Library	Janet Brentnall
Develop a programme of musical performances	<p>To create opportunities to share the creativity of composers and musicians with the community</p> <p>To create opportunities to meet and build relationships with the musical community and music lovers</p>	To be a Church which promotes the performances of music within Berry which are open to all in the Berry community	Once a quarter (at least) or when a visiting musician is available for an appropriate event	Volunteers to work with leaders to organise and promote musical events in Berry	Ona Frazier  David Foley
Men's Shed	To continue to provide the opportunity for community members to participate in the activities of the Mens' Shed	To continue and expand the connections of the church with members of the community	Ongoing	Further promotion of the activities of the Mens Shed	???

	To continue to provide the opportunity to build relationships within which pastoral care may be offered			Volunteers from the church who will be involved in the work of the Mens Shed	
Recommence 'Reconnection Groups' for older people	An opportunity for older people to gather and create relationships which provide opportunities for care and support	Diminish the loneliness that is often felt by older people in the church and community	Monthly	Volunteers willing to host and provide care and support	???
Wills & Estate Planning Seminars	An opportunity for questions to be answered and any confusion to be resolved	The Church provides a public forum for people are better informed about this subject	Once a Year	Preparation of materials that can be made available to attendees  Local Solicitors who will lead information sessions on these topics	Elders & Church Council  Education group
Funeral Planning/Preparation	An opportunity for people to understand the intricacies of Funeral planning and to think about and prepare for the inevitable event	The Church provides a public forum for people are better informed about this subject	Once a Year	Preparation of materials that can be made available to attendees  Local Funeral Directors who will attend the church and conduct a seminar on this subject	Andrew Watts  Elders & Church Council  Education group

## **Goal 5: To integrate and be an example of “creation care” in all we do and say**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Timeline &amp; Regularity</b>	<b>Resources needed</b>	<b>Leader</b>
Community Garden	Develop a space for a community garden on the grounds of the Church	Add to the amenity of the Church property a place for the wider community	Ongoing	Volunteers who will work with the existing Community Garden and local Garden club	John Brentnall  Church Council
Conduct public fora on Climate Change and other issues social justice	To create opportunities to raise awareness in the community about issues, to debate the issues and to take action in some cases	The BerryUC will be known as a Church that cares deeply about the environment	Ongoing		John Brentnall  Church Council
Negotiate a regular item on Climate change and Social Justice in Local Newspaper	To raise and discuss matters about Climate change and social justice as they relate to Berry and the wider community	The BerryUC will be known as a Church that cares deeply about the environment  Matters of importance will be raised in the public forum of the local newspaper	Once a month	A Volunteers to negotiate with the paper and to coordinate items for publication	John Brentnall David Millikan Andrew Watts
Support activities of ARRCC NSW, ARRCC Kiama and Uniting Climate Action Network	To be aware of the various issues related to creation care that these groups are working on and advocating for and participate in that advocacy	Participate in online meetings of ARRCC NSW, ARRCC Kiama & UCAN  Participate in advocacy events e.g. Greenfaith “Faiths 4	Ongoing	Volunteers to convene and coordinate these activities	John Brentnall David Millikan Andrew Watts

	To create opportunities for individuals to make personal changes that will benefit the environment	Climate Justice” October 2022			
Work towards obtaining Five Leaf Advanced Eco Awards	To assist the congregation and individuals to take environmental action and become more sustainable	The BerryUC will be known as a Church that cares deeply about the environment and which takes responsible action	Ongoing	People who will commit to making this a reality	John Brentnall  Church Council
Follow the Season of Creation (SoC) lectionary each year	To offer the opportunity to the congregation to turn their full attention toward God the creator and toward their relationship with the whole creation.	Request worship leaders to follow the SoC lectionary	Follow the SoC Lectionary for use in services	Volunteers willing to be involved with the Minister in the planning, preparation and leadership of Worship Services when using the SoC Lectionary	Andrew Watts  Elders & Church Council
Conduct occasional outdoor services (e.g. at Community Garden)	To heighten appreciation of the natural world around us and of God as Creator	The Church sees itself and is seen to be “outward looking” and interested in worshipping beyond the confines of the Church building	Twice a year (seasonal services)	Development of and commitment to a different way of worshipping	Andrew Watts  Elders & Church Council

## **BERRY UC Community Profile**

The **NCLS Community Social Profile (2016)** indicates the following:

A profile of 7,951 residents living within a 10km radius around 69 Albert St, Berry, NSW.

Total persons	7,951
Total persons aged 15 years or over	6,879
Total number of households	3,153
Total number of families	2,222

In summary, what are most people in your community like?

- The median age of people in your local community is 57 years old. The most common age group is 65 to 69 years. The female/male ratio is 52:48.
- Most commonly, people over 15 years of age have completed up to year 12 at school. The majority of people over 15 do have a non-school qualification. The most common type of qualification is a certificate.
- The most common employment status is not in the labour force. Of those working, the most common occupation is managers and professionals and the most common industry that employs people is health care & social assistance. Individual gross weekly income most commonly falls between \$400 and \$799 per week. Gross family income most commonly falls between \$1250 and \$1999 per week.
- In your area, households are most likely to be a family household. The most common family type is a couple family with no children living in the household. The most common registered marital status of people over 15 is married.
- It is most common for people to live in accommodation that is fully owned. The most common type of dwelling is a separate house.
- Most people were born in Australia and speak only English at home. Of those born overseas the most common birthplace is United Kingdom.

The Berry Community is established and has developed from a largely rural farming community to a popular retirement and holiday community. On any given day, and especially on weekends, the town is alive with visitors. There is a healthy café culture with boutique shops and arts & crafts.

There are a number of families living in Berry with 26% of households having at least one child, however the median age is 57 years. It is therefore a mixture of families and retirees. The education level is generally higher than in most of the Shoalhaven with 54% having a tertiary education.

The Berry Congregation is active and involved in its wider community, It is largely representative of the older demographic of the community There is a strong sense of the importance of social justice issues such as Refugee and Environmental advocacy.

There are retirement facilities in the community in which several members are resident. Uniting has recently bought out a BUPA Facility in Berry. On either side of the church there are attractive and well-developed town houses which were built on land sold by the Church to a developer.

The Church building is located in the centre of Berry and has excellent facilities and buildings which are well utilised by community groups. There is a very successful Men's Shed which is well attended and used by both men and women in the community. This is a good example of a community engagement, although there is a disconnect between the Men's Shed and the Church. The same could be said for the many groups that rent the Church buildings. The Church also runs a Community Library and is the auspice body for a community garden which are also a very successful examples of a community engagement. There is a Manse which is tenanted. They have good income from rentals of their buildings and in many ways the Berry Church facilities are seen as a good resource within the community.

The Services are well attended, and the traditional style of worship is appreciated by those who attend. There are excellent IT/AV facilities in the Church and the Library and the Hall which has allowed for a very efficient online presence. They have transitioned to a hybrid worship which uses both online and in-person worship.

The Church is currently only able to afford a 45% Ministry Agent which is somewhat limiting in terms of developing new mission & ministry. There are several retired Clergy that are available to fill in when required. There are enthusiastic and committed people who are willing to be involved with the work of the Congregation.

Berry Congregation is very open to moving forward and finding new ways to be at Mission in the Community.