



'Regenerating the Church' a strategy for Port Phillip West Presbytery

What's the 2021 Regenerating the Church strategy?

The vision of the strategy *Regenerating the Church: 2021* is 'For the Presbytery of Port Phillip West to be a network of increasingly vibrant, diverse, contextual and disciple-making communities of Christ participating in and witnessing to the wonder of God's mission.'

Why

Several decades ago, belonging to a church was seen for many as an important part of life. Tennis clubs, womens' groups, social events, children's clubs, youth groups, large Sunday Schools and their anniversaries formed an important part of community life.



Change

Much change has taken place since then. For many people, Sunday's are the same as any other day. There are now many faiths in our community, and there are many ways to belong in the community, provided by a range of organisations. Often people now tend to connect to networks rather than to their local

neighbourhood. Social attitudes and spiritual beliefs have also changed.

All this has commonly led to a decline of worshipping communities, and a recognition that in many places the time for trying to attract people to the traditional Church has a limited impact.

New expressions of Missional Church

What is now recognised is that as a Church, we have come to a new stage in our history, and that God is leading the Christian community to be renewed in their mission and create diverse expressions of Church. This means new models of Church – not just doing things a bit differently but a way of being church that is accessible to people, and missional - that is, holding together justice, service, and making disciples.

REGENERATION THE CHURCH 2021 VISION

'a network of increasingly vibrant, diverse, contextual and disciple-making communities of Christ participating in and witnessing to the wonder of God's mission.'

This might mean

- meeting where people already are rather than in a church building
- establishing a walking group that hikes to beautiful places and breaks bread together
- offering a community meal with special spaces of a spiritual nature, in a church building on Wednesday's
- creating a form of church in an Op Shop for people who are disadvantaged or socially isolated.
- developing a missional community that shares life together and meets around a meal in a pub....



Renewed Life

As a result, what is experienced in many places is the development of new communities of faith, which include people with no, or only a distant experience of Church. In this we see afresh the human need to connect with the spiritual, and the welcoming and creative God who continues to call people into the family of God in new ways.



Mixed Economy

It is clear that some congregations continue to attract members, and remain healthy and vibrant. For this reason the Presbytery values highly 'a mixed economy': the inherited and traditional congregation, and the fresh expression of Church.

Being a missional church

Part of being a mixed economy church is listening afresh to our call to join in God's mission in the world. The 2021 Strategy encourages each congregation within the Presbytery to engage in new mission initiatives or expand existing mission activities.

This might mean

- developing a Mainly Music program
- working with asylum seekers
- supporting women returning to the workforce by providing work experience
- building on a playgroup ministry to develop a Messy Church
- providing English conversation opportunities
- teaching older men living alone cooking skills and creating community
- creating a homework club for children needing support

May we have the
imagination and
the courage to
respond to the
call of Christ in
our day.