



Hope Mission Network

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between the Uniting Church Presbytery and Synod of South Australia and the Hope Mission Network

The Presbytery and Synod of South Australia and the Hope Mission Network enter into a mutual agreement to recognise the following:

- a. The Hope Network will acknowledge the authority of the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia in all matters prescribed by the Constitution and Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- b. The Presbytery and Synod of South Australia will recognise the particular character of the Hope Network and will respect the ethos of congregations that align with it, in particular the Memoranda of Understanding entered into between the congregations and the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia.
- c. The Hope Network will be characterized by the following:
 1. **Common mission challenges and opportunities** - The Hope Network exists to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to our world, and will work to assist its member congregations to achieve viable, relevant and practical outreach into their local community, to build up their ability to share the Gospel, and to engage in mission projects beyond their local area as appropriate.
 2. **Theological outlook** - The Hope Network affirms adherence to the Basis of Union of the UCA in its entirety, and in particular confesses the following:
 - i. The 'One Lord Jesus Christ' as the final revelation of God who has appeared once for all in a unique event of universal significance.
 - ii. The canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, as the inspired Word of God.
 - iii. The faith of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic church as expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
 - iv. A strong orthodox and evangelical theology, which Hope Network upholds through its *affiliation with the Assembly of Confessing Congregations* within the Uniting Church in Australia.
 3. **Congregational size and type** - Congregations of all sizes are welcome, as are both urban and rural churches.

4. **Sexual ethic** - Hope Network firmly upholds the Divine order of relationships, attested in Holy Scripture, and characterized by celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in lifelong marriage between a man and a woman. In detail, Hope Network is committed to a positive view of human sexuality and the appropriate expression of sexuality by Christians as found in the statement of the *Assembly of Confessing Congregations* within the Uniting Church in Australia. (see Appendix 1 on page 6)
5. **Geographic location and regional relationships** - The Hope Network may establish regional clusters of congregations to foster localised fellowship, pastoral care and interaction, the development of joint mission projects and community.
6. **New mission initiatives** - The Hope Network will actively support opportunities for church planting and re-invigoration and will seek to help interested congregations to connect with churches experienced in or undertaking church planting.
7. **Relationships with agencies** - The Hope Network will encourage its member congregations to build relationships with church agencies, itinerant ministries and ecumenical groups in their area so that the mission of both congregation and agency is enhanced.
8. **Pastoral care and discipline** - The Hope Network will put into place arrangements for the encouragement and care of congregations within its membership, with particular attention to the pastoral support, encouragement and resourcing of all Ministers within its bounds, and in identifying, encouraging and resourcing gifted and called members for ministry.
9. **Evangelical theological training** - The Hope Network will seek opportunities for the training of its ministers, which reflects the best evangelical scholarship, in accordance with the ethos of the Network.

_____ UNITING CHURCH, in accepting membership of the Hope Mission Network affirms the Hope Mission Network Memorandum of Understanding.

.....
 Chair of the Church Council
 on behalf of the _____ Uniting Church

APPENDIX 1 TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**Assembly of Confessing Congregations
Statement on Sexuality**

- a. We believe that God created us as male and female to live in freedom and unity with each other by being faithful to our male or female gender. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24)
- b. We believe that sexual intercourse should be expressed solely within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, which God ordained and which is confirmed by Christ and honoured by its unique likeness to Christ's relationship to the Church.
(Gen 2:24; Mat 19:4-7; Mk.10:6-8; Eph. 5:25-33)
- c. We believe that people who engage in homosexual practice are acting contrary to the clear witness of Scripture to our creation by God as male and female (Lev. 18:22a; 20:13; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9-20; 1 Tim.1:8-11)
- d. We believe that people who engage in homosexual practice harm the eucharistic fellowship of the Church as the Body of Christ
(1 Cor 5-6)
- e. We believe that the Church's solidarity with the world in sin (Rom 3:23) and gratitude for the reconciliation of the world in Christ (2 Cor 5:16-21) commits her:
 - i. To speak Christ's word of mercy and friendship to any person who is tempted by homosexual practice (John 8:1-11), and to offer them counseling and pastoral care when they experience temptation, hostility, illness or bereavement (Galatians 6:1-6)
 - ii. To invite people practicing homosexuality to experience Christ's freedom by abandoning behaviour which is contrary to the clear witness of Scripture (Galatians 5:16-25)
- f. We believe that the Church should not normalize homosexual practices within the Church by:
 - i. Ordaining, commissioning or inducting into the ministries of the Church those practicing homosexuality.
 - ii. Solemnizing or blessing homosexual unions.