



habitat uniting church
a centre for spirituality

august 2011



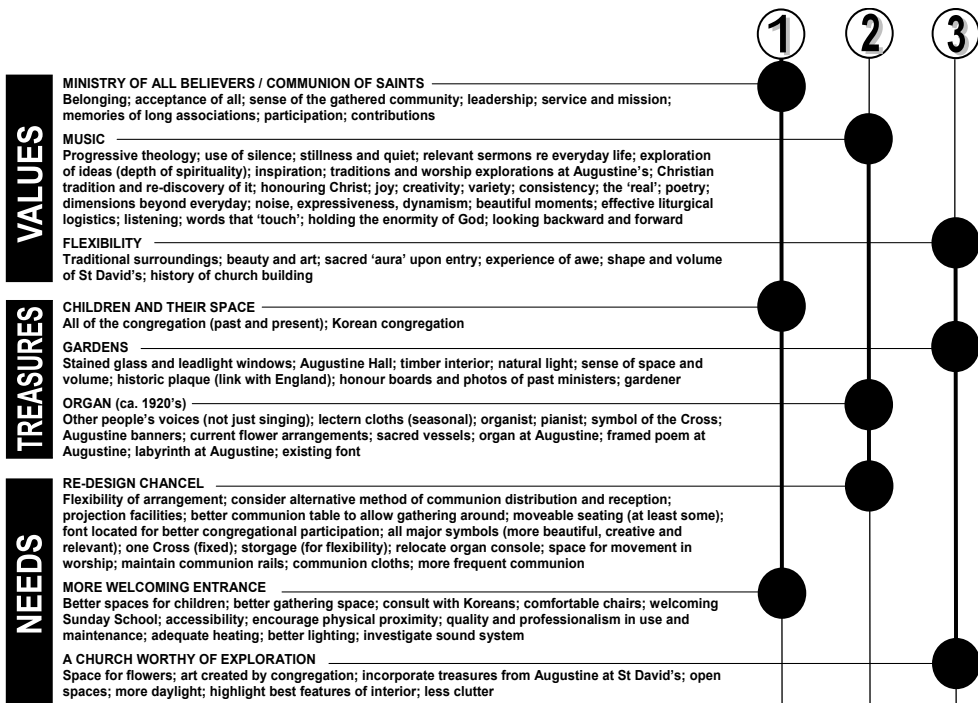
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relationships

This diagram establishes relationships between the VALUES, TREASURES and NEEDS identified by the participants.



participants

During mid-2011, the congregation of Habitat Uniting Church was invited to offer its guidance in setting forth aspirations for renewal of St David's Church in Camberwell. The following people registered for, and participated in, at least one of four meetings. Two formation sessions were held on 29 May and 4 June.; two discernment sessions were held on 31 July and 13 August. The concepts that emerged were adopted by the participants at their final meeting.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Ruth Barclay | Lyn Cowen | Bruce Mason | Rob Sutherland |
| Jennifer Barnes | Roland Cropley | Helen Mason | Thelma Kuhnemann |
| Murray Baxter | Ian David | Ruth McCall | Nancy Larkin |
| Lyndie Birch | Erica Downard | Richard Moore | Julian Tully |
| Rob Brown | Constance Eastwood | Ken Morrison | Leanne Tully |
| Gill Brown | Weston Elvins | George Ray | Tessa Wallis |
| Ian Brown | Jo Elvins | Margaret Ray | David Wright Howie |
| Rebecca Brown | Linden Fowler | Jim Rush | Rev Joan Wright |
| Virginia Burns | Leila Gayford | Ann Sartori | Howie, Minister |
| Brendan Cartmel | Graeme Hawkins | Lesley Shekleton | |
| John Cavedon | Avril Jones | Jean Sietzema- | <i>Facilitators:</i> |
| Val Cavedon | Ian Kerr | Dickson | |
| Frank Coops | Pam Kerr | Rennice Stanley | Rev Dr Patrick Negri |
| Jan Coops | Christine Kovic | Carolyn Sutherland | Randall Lindstrom |



introduction

In November 2009, the congregations that had recently merged to form Habitat Uniting Church engaged in a consultation and discernment process to envisage and describe our *'future directions'*. The topics were wide-ranging, but included issues related to worship and the congregation's place in the wider community. Amongst its thoughts in the category of worship, the congregation stated the following:

"Regardless of worship style, we need spaces for worship that are sacred, reflective of both historic and contemporary needs, and dynamic enough to adapt to evolving thought and practice. Our worship spaces need to be worthy of their use and, through their beauty, be a reflection of our faith."

That vision statement became the impetus for a subsequent discernment process in mid-2011, dedicated to the exploration of possibilities for renewal of our worship facility at St David's Church. As in the *'future directions'* process, an open invitation to participate was extended to the entire congregation. The forty-nine people who responded became an advisory group,

needs

This list represents all responses of the participants when asked the question: *Given what you say you value and what you hold as treasures, what NEEDS do you have, which if addressed, might strengthen the worship experience of this faith community?* The 'dots' to the left indicate the number of participants that saw each item as amongst the congregation's most important needs.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|-------|---|
| ●●●●●●●● | RE-DESIGN CHANCEL | ●●●●● | SPACE FOR FLOWERS |
| ●●●●●●●● | FLEXIBILITY OF ARRANGEMENT IN CHURCH | ●●● | STORAGE (for flexibility) |
| ●●●●●●●● | MORE WELCOMING ENTRANCE | ●●● | ACCESSIBILITY |
| ●●●●●●●● | CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION / RECEPTION | ●●● | ART CREATED BY CONGREGATION |
| ●●●●●●●● | BETTER SPACE(S) FOR CHILDREN | ●●● | ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL PROXIMITY (amongst congregation) |
| ●●●●●●●● | PROJECTION FACILITY (media) | ●●● | RELOCATE ORGAN CONSOLE |
| ●●●●●●●● | NEW AND BETTER GATHERING (and leaving) SPACE | ●●● | QUALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM IN USE AND MAINTENANCE OF CHURCH BUILDING |
| ●●●●●●●● | A CHURCH WORTHY OF EXPLORATION | ●● | MAINTAIN COMMUNION RAILS |
| ●●●●●●●● | CONSULT WITH KOREAN'S RE: SHARED USE | ●● | INCORPORATE TREASURES FROM AUGUSTINE AT ST DAVID'S |
| ●●●●●●●● | BETTER COMMUNION TABLE TO ALLOW GATHERING AROUND | ●● | SPACE FOR MOVEMENT IN WORSHIP |
| ●●●●●●●● | MOVEABLE SEATING (at least some) | ● | OPEN SPACES (less clutter) |
| ●●●●●●●● | FONT LOCATED FOR BETTER CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION | ● | MORE DAYLIGHT |
| ●●●●●●●● | ALL MAJOR SYMBOLS (more beautiful, creative and relevant for today) | ● | COMMUNION CLOTHS (to match lectern frontals) |
| ●●●●● | COMFORTABLE CHAIRS and CUSHIONS | ● | ADEQUATE HEATING |
| ●●●●● | WELCOMING SUNDAY SCHOOL AREA | | BETTER ARTIFICIAL LIGHT |
| ●●●●● | ONE CROSS (FIXED) | | MORE FREQUENT COMMUNION |
| | | | HIGHLIGHT BEST FEATURES OF CHURCH INTERIOR |
| | | | LESS CLUTTER |
| | | | INVESTIGATE SOUND SYSTEM (place for control; training in usage) |

treasures

This list represents all responses of the participants when asked the question: *Consider your site, your buildings, your furnishings, your art and your people. Which, among them, have become so important to the worship experience of this community that they are now seen as TREASURES?* The 'dots' to the left indicate the number of participants that saw each item as amongst the congregation's most cherished treasures.

●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	CHILDREN AND THEIR SPACE	●●●●●●●●	SENSE OF SPACE AND VOLUME
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	STAINED GLASS and LEADLIGHT WINDOWS	●●●●●●●●	ORGANIST
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	GARDENS	●●●●●●●●	KOREAN CONGREGATION
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	AUGUSTINE HALL for occasional worship	●●●●●●●●	PIANIST
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	TIMBER INTERIOR (Pews and structure)	●●●●●●●●	SYMBOL OF THE CROSS
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	ORGAN (ca. 1920's)	●●●●●●●●	AUGUSTINE BANNERS
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	ALL OF THE CONGREGATION (past and present)	●●●●●●●●	CURRENT FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	OTHER PEOPLE'S VOICES (not just singing)	●●●●●●●●	ORGAN AT AUGUSTINE
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	LECTERN CLOTHS (seasonal)	●●●●●●●●	FRAMED POEM AT AUGUSTINE CENTRE (welcome)
●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●	NATURAL LIGHT	●●●●●●●●	HISTORIC PLAQUE (Link with England)
		●●●●●●●●	HONOUR BOARDS and PHOTOS OF PAST MINISTERS
		●●●●●●●●	LABYRINTH at Augustine
		●●●●●●●●	SACRED VESSELS
		●●●●●●●●	GARDENER
		●●●●●●●●	EXISTING FONT

engaged in a professionally-facilitated process, and authored this document, outlining our conclusions and advice.

We gathered on four occasions, for twelve hours of formation, discussion, prayer and fellowship. Our work focused on possible improvements to our worship environment, but we approached this subject as a journey of discovery, without any foregone conclusion that change *must* occur. Recognising and celebrating the diversity amongst us, we searched for shared concepts of worship. We did so by exploring our fundamental *values* in worship, identifying the *treasures* of our worship environment, and naming what we see as the most important worship *needs*.

Although it would have been premature to consider the subject of costs in these deliberations, we are mindful of our call to good stewardship. If renewal of our church building is pursued, we recognise the need to balance our worship needs with other needs, and do so within the context of available resources.

The following advice, in the form of concept statements, is prayerfully and thoughtfully offered as a vision for renewal of our church building, and as a guide for design, should the congregation choose to undertake the next step of exploration.



worship: *the people*

When we worship, we participate in the Ministry of All Believers, and are part of the Communion of Saints, with memories of often long associations with place and people. We value the sense of belonging that derives from a gathered community, in which all are welcomed and accepted. Worship is the responsibility of all who participate, and we appreciate the roles of leadership that are undertaken by clergy and laity, alike. Whether as leaders or participants, we know that Sunday worship is equipping us for the on-going service and mission that flows from it.

The value we place on community is reflected in our high regard for people. We view the congregation — both present and past — as treasures. The children, amongst us, are held in special esteem, because in them we see the future, and hope that our example helps stimulate and shape their spirituality. We also treasure the Korean congregation, and their shared use of our facilities.

values

This list represents all responses of the participants when asked the question: *Consider those abstract things that form the spirituality of this community, define it and make it special; things such as your beliefs, ideas, experiences and memories. What, then, are your VALUES?* The 'dots' to the left indicate the number of participants that saw each item as amongst the congregation's most important values.



appendix

The foregoing Concept Statements result from a process of group discernment, involving many steps of progressive participation. A record of the participants' intermediate work and emerging thoughts is included on the following pages.

Although the primary responsibility for nurturing a sense of community is ours — person to person — buildings and facilities can assist by offering a friendly and accommodating environment. We believe our communal worship experiences could be enhanced with certain improvements to the church environment. For example, we need a more welcoming entrance with a larger space for gathering. We need better facilities for children, in the worship space, as well as in their sacred space. Full physical accessibility needs to be offered, including to all aspects of liturgy. The worship space needs to provide comfortable seating that promotes a sense of community and intimacy. In addition, it needs to provide a comfortable level of heating, lighting and sound reinforcement.

In all things, we need to encourage quality and professionalism in the use and maintenance of our facilities. As we approach these and other improvements, we need to consult with the Korean congregation, so that shared use is made as practicable as possible.



worship: *the experience*

We strive to honour Christ and worship God in the context of 'progressive theology'. In that context, we find the freedom to explore worship practices other than traditional and conventional, in pursuit of ideas that encompass the full depth of spirituality, and dimensions beyond the everyday. Some of us value the exploration of worship styles — such as formerly found at the Augustine Centre — while others value Christian tradition and the re-discovery of it. It may be too much to expect any service to do so, individually, but perhaps over the course of liturgical seasons, our services can collectively satisfy the longings for variety and consistency, for dynamism and stillness, for noise and silence, for looking backward and forward, for the 'real' as well as the transcendent. In so doing, our worship experiences can reflect the challenge and joy of faith, itself.

We value the effective use of music, including robust congregational singing and the leadership of organ and piano accompaniment. We also value the sermons, in particular those which relate the deepest concepts of spirituality

In preserving and highlighting the best features of St David's Church, while respectfully equipping it for new needs in worship, we seek to effect a church building that is worthy of exploration and admiration as a sanctuary. We see an opportunity to enhance its artistic offerings, including the introduction of fine art created by artists within our congregation. There may be an opportunity for increased daylight and more visual connection to creation, outside, as well as designated places for flowers, to signify creation, inside. With more flexibility and less clutter, there may be an opportunity for 'blank space' ... space for the Spirit, rather than practical function. There may also be an opportunity to link the worship heritage of our two campuses, by thoughtfully incorporating treasures from the Augustine Centre at St David's Church.

Our hope and desire is to integrate an historic building with new worship practices so that all who enter may encounter the sacred.



worship: *the environment*

The character and ambience of the worship building is important to our experience. While we value flexibility in its internal arrangement, we do so with respect for the history and traditional surroundings that St David's Church presents. We value the beauty and art of its architecture. Its shape, volume, materials and colours combine to offer a sacred 'aura', and for some of us, an experience of awe.

Not only is the building a treasure, so are its gardens and those who tend them. The gardens are vitally linked to the building's first impression. Once inside, the treasures of its lofty timber roof structure, stained glass and leadlight windows, and natural light begin to reveal themselves. Beyond its architecture, the heritage of the building is evidenced by historic plaques, honour boards and photos of past ministers. Taken together, all of its features — including those that might be changed or improved — have the ability to foreshadow the quality and dignity of experience the building has to offer, even in a new day.

to the encounters of everyday life, and in so doing inspire our highest and best response. Through these, and all other aspects of worship, we seek to find those beautiful moments and experiences that hold the enormity of God.

Given our appreciation of music, we count the St David's organ, as well as our musicians, amongst the treasures of our current worship experience. Along with music, we treasure the sound of other people's voices, not only in singing, but also in conversations and in the telling of stories. The voice of 'others' is a symbol of community, and strengthens the act of worship. As Christians, we look to the cross as a central symbol of worship, acting as a kind of nucleus that gathers and organises the other primary symbols. We have sacred vessels, used for worship over many decades, which hold memories of the people and sacramental milestones of our church. Some of us see treasures in permanent objects of worship, such as the existing font. Others see treasures in more transient and decorative items, such as the seasonal lectern cloths, flower arrangements and banners. The Augustine Centre is also used for worship, and many see treasures there, including the banners, the

organ, the framed poem of welcome, and the labyrinth. All contribute to the quality of our worship experiences.

If our worship experience is going to hold the tension of our diversity, our worship arrangement needs to be as accommodating to tradition and consistency, as it is to experimentation and variety. That will require flexibility, beginning with a re-design of the chancel. The current chancel includes fixed elements that limit the potential for alternative arrangement, movement and focus. The organ console, for example, needs to be relocated such that the organist can see the liturgical action and participate in it, without being at its focal point.

Although some of us find communion distribution at the existing rails to be familiar and satisfactory, most believe that we need to consider alternative methods of communion distribution and reception, not dependent on the presence of communion rails. The existing rails, however, need to be appropriately honoured, perhaps by seeing them used for liturgical purposes, but in another manner or form. As alternative forms of communion are explored, we see the related need for a better

communion table, designed and positioned to foster the sense of 'gathering around', whether literally or symbolically.

In addition to the table, our worship arrangement needs to include a full complement of primary Christian symbols, creatively and beautifully designed to respect their traditional setting, while giving greater relevance to their meaning and use in modern worship. Amongst those symbols, some of us would like to see the font better designed and positioned for congregational participation. There are also those who envisage the advantages of at least some moveable seating and, with it, greater space for movement of worship participants. We need image projection capabilities, positioned for effectiveness, but to avoid distraction from liturgical focus. Critical to a flexible worship arrangement, we need storage. To avoid clutter, all portable items, especially those unused at a particular service, must be able to be stored out of sight, and readily returned for use at another time.