



ASSEMBLY STRATEGY 2026-31



CHALLENGES OF THE TIME

The Church faces both internal and external challenges which are complex. Meaningful impact in any one of these areas requires us to continue to be God's people that are ***mission oriented, open to change, and committed to justice and inclusivity.***

1. Declining Attendance and Membership

There are fewer people engaging in worship and discipleship, limiting the Church's ability to share the love of Jesus and grow followers who live out faith in daily life.

2. Called to Serve Diverse Communities

There is no 'one size fits all' model and the church must listen, learn and respond to be inclusive of culture, traditions, languages, age and life experience.

3. Theological Identity and Liturgy Renewal

We have not focused resources on our collective teaching and worship for some time and this has put more pressure on regional structures.

4. Reconciliation and Social Justice Focus

We have relied on one or two agencies to be our voice, but this is not as effective as working together on priority areas.

5. Financial Pressures and Resource Constraints

Mission and ministry needs exceed our available resources and we need to do better at identifying shared solutions.

6. Council Resource Disparities

Some of our councils are under resourced leaving some gaps in service to communities.

7. Lack of Trust and Unity Across Councils

Our conciliar in structure relies upon trust, strong relationships and collective seeking of God's direction. Without this culture, there is a risk that the church could become divided.

8. Digital Transformation and Communication

Less face-to-face engagement and missed opportunities to connect with younger people and wider communities, challenges responding to emerging technology like AI.

9. Aging Congregations and Workforce

Communities struggling to grow in their love for God and engage meaningfully in scripture and worship.

10. Complex Rules and Processes

Complex rules and processes can slow decision-making and reduce agility, making it harder for ministry to respond quickly to community needs and opportunities to share the love of God.



FOUNDATIONAL COMMITMENTS & STRATEGIC SHIFTS

The strategy is grounded in prior collective decisions that set the foundation for our future direction. We have 6 foundational commitments and corresponding strategic shifts that will guide the next strategy season:

- 1. Cultivating our theological culture:** Grounded in Christ's wisdom, we nurture a culture of thoughtful reflection, lively wrestling and passionate sharing of faith. ***We will deliver national resources for theological, discipleship and worship renewal.***
- 2. Reviving our Covenant commitment:** In Christ's reconciling love, we commit to reviving our Covenant with Congress seeking to be relational, accountable and culturally grounded. ***We affirm and will enact in our law and life the sovereignty and self-determination of Congress.***
- 3. Accompanying the global church with purpose:** In response to Christ's call to unity, we participate in the global Church, fostering unity, mutual learning, and shared witness. ***We will purposefully deepen our relationships with the global church.***
- 4. Ordering our life for God's mission:** Shaped by Christ's obedient, self-giving life, aligning our communities, resources, relationships to serve God's mission. ***We will change our internal structures to better serve the mission of the church.***
- 5. Promoting mission from the margins:** Following Christ, who identified with the poor and outcast, we support those whose ministry arise from the edges of society and the church. ***We will listen to and make our churches more inclusive for all cultures and ages.***
- 6. Speaking prophetically in the world:** Empowered by the Spirit of Christ, we speak truth to power and advocate for God's justice, mercy, and love in society. ***We will create a unified advocacy voice which is stronger and more impactful.***

Uniting Church in Australia | National Assembly Strategy 2026–31



Our Vision: Uniting in Christ
Flourishing Faith – Thriving Communities – Liberating Justice

FOUNDATIONAL COMMITMENTS & STRATEGIC SHIFTS

<p>Cultivating our theological culture</p> <p><i>We will deliver national resources for theological, discipleship and worship renewal.</i></p>	<p>Reviving our Covenant commitment</p> <p><i>We affirm and will enact in our law and life the sovereignty and self-determination of Congress.</i></p>	<p>Accompanying the global church with purpose</p> <p><i>We will purposefully deepen our relationships with the global church.</i></p>	<p>Ordering our life for God’s mission</p> <p><i>We will change our internal structures to better serve the mission of the church.</i></p>	<p>Promoting mission from the margins</p> <p><i>We will listen to and make our churches more inclusive for all cultures and ages.</i></p>	<p>Speaking prophetically in the world</p> <p><i>We will create a unified advocacy voice which is stronger and more impactful.</i></p>
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STRATEGIC MEASURES	A. 90% of strategic initiatives are completed or on track	B. Increasing response to “We are a truly national church”	C. Increased engagement with strategic communications	E. On track to reach net zero by 2040	F. One Church wide advocacy activation per annum
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STRATEGIC GOALS, INITIATIVES & WORKING GROUPS

GOAL 1: FLOURISHING FAITH

We extend the table to everyone, inviting them to follow Jesus with courageous faith.

1. A redesigned and revived Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Secretariat) ^P
2. Reach rural & remote communities (Frontier Services)
3. Deepen collaboration on theological education (Secretariat)
4. Theological culture work on mission, evangelism, discipleship and diaconal communities (Secretariat)
5. Liturgy renewal of our authorised services (Secretariat)
6. Uniting in Prayer 2026 & 2027 (President)

GOAL 2: THRIVING COMMUNITIES

We work together so that we can be a truly national church and local communities can thrive.

1. Improving local regulatory environment for communities of faith (Secretariat)
2. Feasibility of 3 or 4 council model and other ways of deepening collaboration (Secretariat)
3. A contemporary standard for ministry agents (Secretariat)
4. Purposeful and strategic international engagement with the global church (Secretariat) ^P
5. Strategic change communications to leaders (Secretariat)
6. Building strategic and productive collaboration between Assembly, Synods & Agencies (Secretariat) ^P
7. National and international discipleship opportunities for building young leaders (Secretariat) ^P

GOAL 3: LIBERATING JUSTICE

We use our voice and our actions to confront injustice in Australia and the world.

1. Gain stature as influential player in faith-based climate adaption (UnitingWorld)
2. Extend engagement and support from UCA and adjacent communities (UnitingWorld)
3. Advocacy for justice for First Peoples (UnitingCare)
4. Advocacy for ageing to our full potential (UnitingCare)
5. Advocacy for economic equality & inclusion (UnitingCare)
6. Advocacy for Remote Australians (Frontier Services)
7. Reduce carbon emissions to Zero by 2040 (Secretariat)
8. Assembly wide Advocacy (Secretariat)
9. Becoming an anti-racist Church (Secretariat) ^P

Revival of the Covenant Working Group (1)	Act2 Stream B (4 & 5) transition from Standards for Ministries	Support Continuing Witness Task Group (5)
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Act2 Stream A Communities of Faith Reference Group (1)	Act2 Stream C Governance, Resourcing and Administration (2)	Code of Ethics Review Reference Group (3)
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Net Zero Steering Committee (7)	National Justice Network(8)
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Further Background Notes

- **Reviving the Covenant (Initiative 1.1)** arose from the decision of the 17th Assembly:
 - 24.16.01 to set up a Covenant Revival Working Group (made up of equal numbers of Congress and non – Congress members) to:
 - (a) hear the stories of what has worked well and not so well since the Covenant agreement was signed in 1994;
 - (b) establish how Congress may build up a capital and income base (including from the proceeds of Uniting Church property sales), so that Congress ministry can grow and flourish; and
 - (c) report back to the 18th Assembly with stories, ideas, principles and proposals, so that together we (the Uniting Church & the UAICC) can “live out” the gospel through a redesign and revival of the Covenant;
- **Theological Culture is defined in Act2: *The Gift of the Spirit* (Foundational Commitment 1; Initiative 1.4)**- “The theological culture of the Uniting Church is the network of practices, institutions and texts which expands, critiques and disciplines the Uniting Church’s theological imagination. Embodied in the discipleship of members of the Uniting Church in their many relationships and responsibilities, it produces pastoral wisdom, prophetic speech and doctrinal decisions about God, Christ and the world.”
- **Continuing Witness Task Group** arose from the decision of the 17th Assembly:
 - 24.11.05 to ask the Assembly Standing Committee appoint a Task Group to explore the possibilities of recognising further Continuing Witness documents/and or other forms of witness, and in doing so, learn from the church’s experience of recognising and using these three documents.
- **The two Commission are established to progress the Stream B – A Network for a Flourishing Theological Culture (Initiatives 1.3 & 1.4) and Stream C – Sharing Our Common Life and Wealth (Initiatives 2.2 & 2.6). The Stream A – Life-Giving Communities of Discipleship and Mission is directly overseen by the ASC (Initiative 2.1)** . For more detail see the Act2 website: www.act2uca.com
- **Net Zero Steering Committee** arose from the decision of the 17th Assembly:
 - 24.12.02 that the NET ZERO report to the 18th Assembly include:
 - (a) Standardised guidelines for all entities of the church to calculate and report on their Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
 - (b) A feasibility study into the Uniting Church in Australia becoming a provider of carbon offsets; and
 - (c) The opportunities available to work with First Nations people in the achievement of our Net Zero targets.
 - 24.12.03 that the Steering Group be responsible for networking and the sharing and promotion of resources across the national church;
 - 24.12.04 that an annual national Net Zero roundtable be auspiced by the Assembly;