



# Parramatta Nepean Presbytery

The Uniting Church in Australia NSW & ACT Synod



## Governance Training for Church Councils



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**Welcome**

**Acknowledgement of Country**

**Introductions**



# *Parramatta Nepean Presbytery*

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Congregational



Methodist



Presbyterian



## The Uniting Churches

- Congregational
- Methodist
- Presbyterian

Uniting Church  
in Australia





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## **Additional UCA Priorities:**

- **mission is at the heart of our life;**
- **government through interrelated councils as opposed to hierarchy;**
- **an openness to constant reform.**
- ***A Covenanting Church – especially with UAICC***
- ***A Multicultural/Intercultural Church***



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# The Basis of Union

- **The Basis of Union is a foundational document, theological and missional. It also gives the basis for ministry and government in the Uniting Church.**
- **But it is not a constitution, and nor is it the last word in theological reflection: the Basis itself calls for continued reflection on the Word.**
- **The Basis cannot be changed, but forms of ministry and government can be modified (and have been).**



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## **Brief outline of the BoU**

- 1. The way into Union (1)**
- 2. Of the Whole Church (2)**
- 3. Built Upon the one Lord Jesus Christ (3)**
- 4. Christ Rules & Renews his Church (4)**
- 5. The Biblical Witness (5)**
- 6. Sacraments (6)**
- 7. Baptism (7)**
- 8. Holy Communion (8)**
- 9. Creeds (9)**



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- 10. Reformation Witness (10)**
- 11. Scholarly Interpreters (11)**
- 12. Members (12)**
- 13. Gifts and Ministries (13)**
- 14. Ministers, Elders, Deaconesses & Lay Preachers**
- 15. Government in the Church**
- 16. Particular Functions**
- 17. Law in the Church**
- 18. The People of God on the Way...**



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## Some Priorities of the BoU...

**The Basis of Union envisages a church where there is:**

- 1. Recognition that Christ is the Head of the Church, rules, feeds, nurtures and guides the Church and we submit to the Lordship of Christ, not that of any other entity, person and power. We are built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ! Christ rules and renews the church.**
- 2. United/Uniting in diversity (eg John 17, Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12-13, Galatians 3:28-29). The Basis of Union invites the church to respond to Christ's prayer that *'they be one, as you and I are one.'***



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- 3. Relationship and Reconciliation – We proclaim the Triune God, three in one, where the three are held in the infinite love of the relational community. We proclaim that God is revealed and known in our own loving relationships, love of God and of our neighbours grounded in the self-giving love of God that was perfectly revealed in Jesus (eg (Philippians 2)).**
- 4. Government, Shared Power and Decision-making: Power, in the Uniting Church, is shared and diffused across the four councils of the church, each with their own responsibilities and authority. Within those councils, the process of decision-making is clearly to hear all voices and discern together God’s call upon our common life.**



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- 5. Inclusive Community where all are Called and Sent into Ministry. We serve each other and share life and faith with the world, through witness and service. The gifts of the whole people of God are to be used in building up the whole for ministry and service.**
  
- 6. Recognition we are a Pilgrim People, on the way to the Promised Land. We have no continuing city but seek one to come. Against the natural desire and tendency of all of us to ground ourselves in a safe, secure and certain structure and belief system, we are called to be Pilgrim People on the Way... We are fed on the way through word and sacraments, that nourish us and sustain us as the community of God's people.**



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**7. Leaders lead with humility, faith and openness. The Church needs those who are called to lead, but they lead through humble service, not overt power that is exercised ‘over’ other people. Leaders lead with wisdom, seeking prayerfully, to follow the example of Jesus and enter into the fellowship of his sufferings.**

### **God’s Mission – Our Mission!**

***There is only one mission – God’s! God’s Mission in the world is the reconciliation of all things (2 Corinthians 5:19) and we are called into this mission and ministry as God’s people – a Fellowship of reconciliation. Therefore, nurturing relationship and engaging in the practice of reconciliation when relationships break down is of paramount importance and a priority for the Church.***

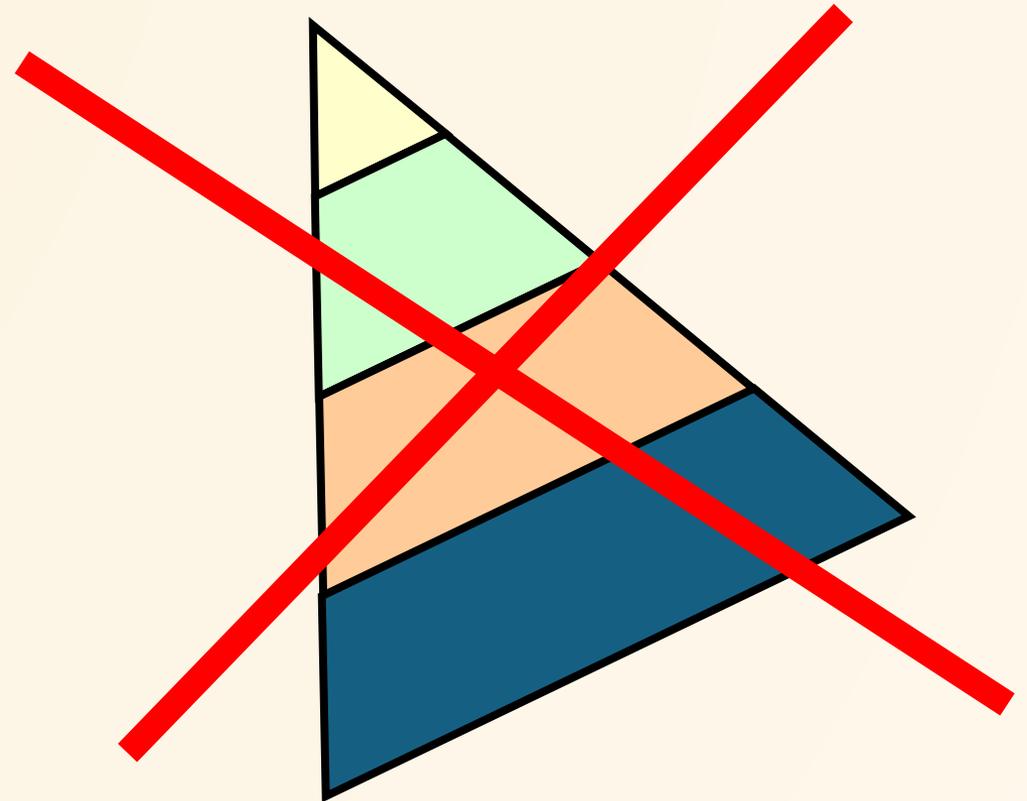
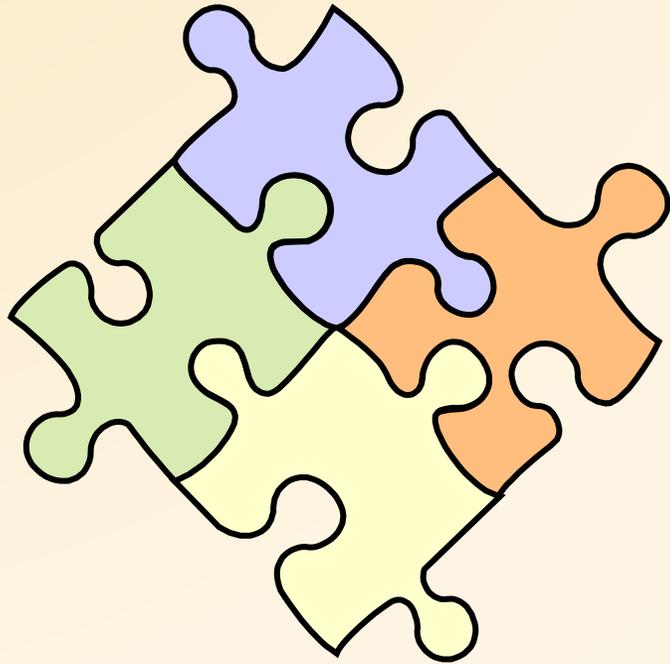


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## How is the Uniting Church Organised and Governed?





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***Paragraph 15 of The Basis of Union says:***

**“The Uniting Church therefore so organises its life that locally, regionally and nationally government will be entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing the gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of the Church.**

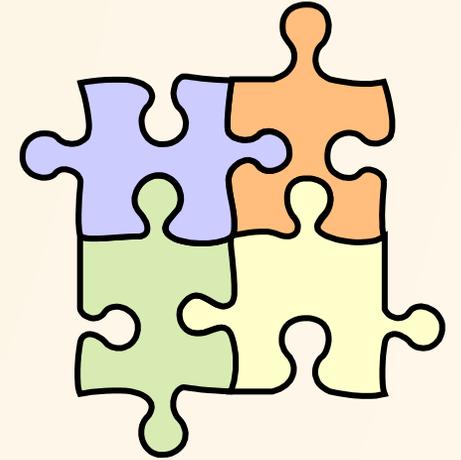
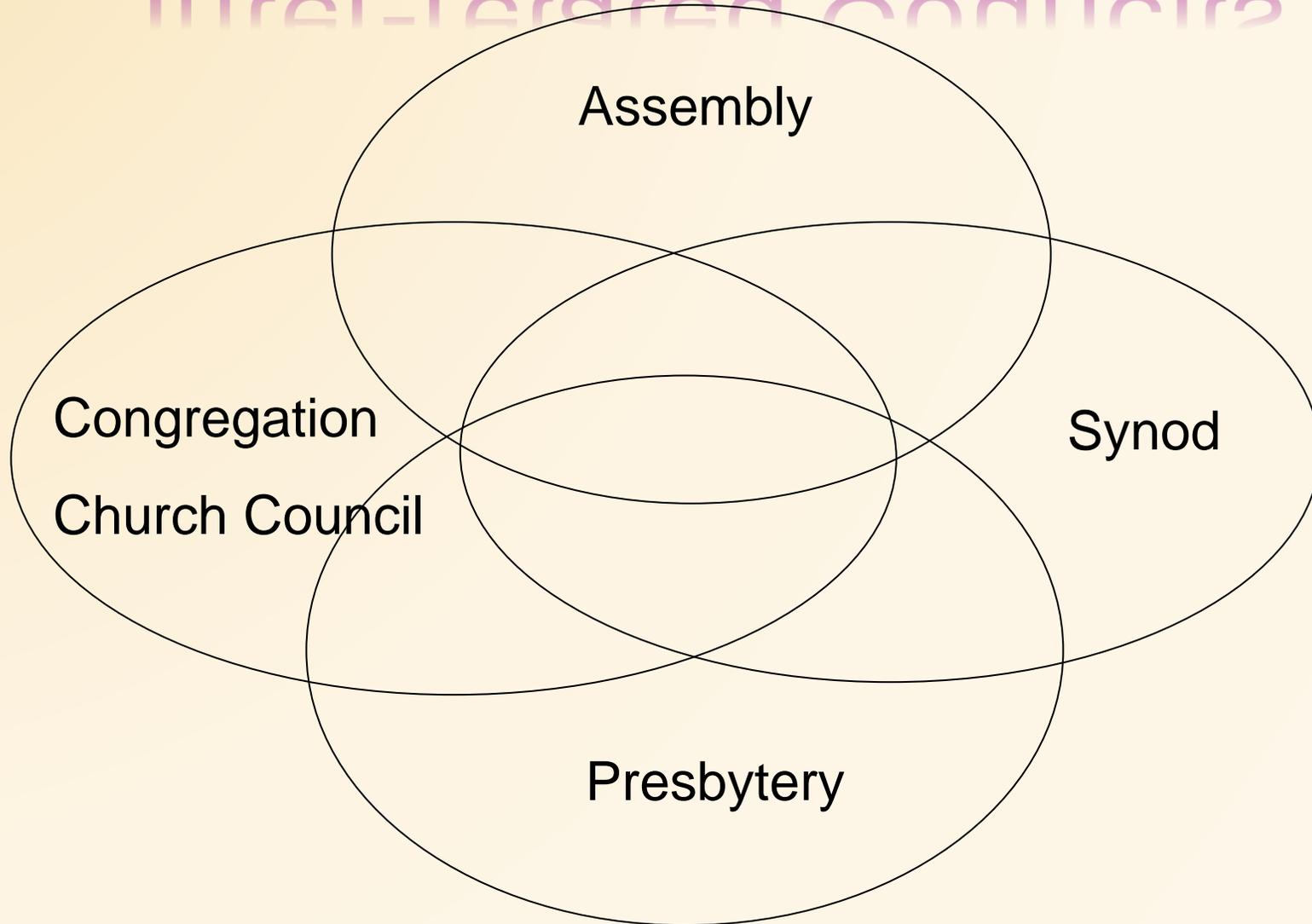
***The Uniting Church is governed by a series of inter-related councils, EACH OF WHICH HAS ITS SET TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES in relation both to the Church and to the world.”***



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# Inter-related Councils





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# **Assembly's Responsibilities:**

**Doctrine, worship, government  
& mission of the Church**

**Determine standards for theological  
education**

**Receive Ministers from other  
denominations**

**Act in all matters where exclusive authority  
is not given to another council of Church  
Affiliate with ecumenical & other bodies**

**Provide for control, management  
& discipline of Church**



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## **Synod's Responsibilities:**

**General oversight, direction, administration of Church's  
worship, witness and service**

**Resourcing of Presbyteries**

**Pastoral, executive, administrative, disciplinary  
responsibilities in relation to Presbyteries**

**Oversight of matters referred from Presbyteries**

**Establish & maintain boards, institutions, committees and  
agencies**

**Supervise property matters**



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## Synods of the Uniting Church in Australia





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**Presbyteries *are the regional council whose primary responsibility is oversight of the life and mission of congregations within its bounds.***

***The presbytery holds the corporate Episcopal function – oversight.***



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# **Presbytery Responsibilities:**

**Encourage congregations within presbytery,  
strengthening and assisting them in their mission**

**Pastoral and administrative  
oversight of congregations**

**Assist participation in  
wider work of Church**



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## **Committees & Agencies of a Presbytery**

**The Presbytery shall establish:**

**A Standing Committee**

**A Pastoral Relations Committee**

**A Property Committee**

**Any other committees as may be prescribed or as it deems necessary or desirable, and may disband any committees so established**



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**Congregations are the embodiment in a particular place of the one holy catholic and apostolic faith and are seen to be the focus and centre of the church's life – its ministry and mission.**



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## **Congregation's Responsibilities:**

- **Hear God's Word**
- **Celebrate the sacraments**
- **Encourage one another in love**
- **Share wider responsibilities of the Church**
- **Serve the world**



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## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL (See Para 24, Constitution and Regulations 3.1.2)**

**3.1.2 (a) The Church Council shall give priority in its life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world. This priority shall be reflected in the agenda of its ordinary meetings.**



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### **3.1.2 b - The responsibilities of the Church Council include:**

- i. sharing with the Minister(s) in mission and in the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the Congregation;**
- ii. nurturing the members and adherents in their growth in grace;**
- iii. making decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of the rolls of the Congregation; (See Part 1 of these Regulations)**
- iv. assisting the Minister(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the sacraments;**
- v. determining the time and place of services of public worship;**



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- vi. Carrying out its functions in accordance with the regulations concerning applicants for specified ministries.**
- vii. managing the financial affairs and the general administration of the Congregation including the reception, preparation and presentation of all necessary budgets, statements and reports;**
- viii. arranging for audit, presentation and examination of the accounts of all the funds of the Congregation;**
- ix. managing and controlling property in accordance with the Regulations;**



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- x. preparing and presenting to a meeting of the Congregation an annual report concerning the life and work of the Congregation including its worship, mission and service, and making recommendations with regard to the program for the ensuing year;**
- xi. exercising oversight of the appointment of officers and leaders of Congregational organisations;**
- xii. referral of matters to Presbytery as prescribed;**
- xiii. discipline of members (See Reg. 5.1.2 – 5.2.5);**
- xiv carrying out its functions in relation to Ministers-in-Association**



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## **The Church Council is responsible for**

- **Keeping the Mission of the Congregation central to everything!**
- **The finances of the Congregation**
- **Appointing people to paid and unpaid roles**
- **Managing the Congregation's property**
- **Approving activities carried out in the name of the Congregation**
- **Ensuring that the church is a safe place for everyone.**



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## **Some thoughts:**

**Involve the Congregation when -**

- **it's important to bring the Congregation with you**
- **a matter is likely to be very controversial**
- **significant resourcing is involved, especially if that involves incurring debt**

**Church Council Discussions and Business are Confidential until such time as they are reported and conveyed to the wider congregation. Some things are very sensitive and should not be discussed with anyone outside the Church Council!**



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**Congregation Vision/Mission  
Planning Consultation...**

**Church Council (+ key leaders)  
develop a Strategic Plan of  
what we will do to  
implement the Vision.**

**Committees, Actions Teams,  
Staff or volunteers work out  
'How' and do the  
actual work**



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**The Church Council has an oversight role in governance and provides direction and strategy for the congregation according to the Vision and Mission discerned by the congregation as a whole.**

**The Church Council makes decisions and develops the strategy for its implementation and delegates that to a committee/Action Team/Staff person/Volunteer...**

**The Church Council DOES NOT spend time working out how a decision must be implemented – the ‘tactics’. The Church Council doesn’t manage, it governs and delegates!**



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## **Making and Implementing Decisions**

**The Church Council will be responsible to make various decisions, some small, others significant. The work does not end with a decision made!**

**The Church Council must also decide how a decision will be implemented – who will be responsible for ensuring this decision is enacted? The Church Council will determine to whom it will delegate the responsibility to implement a decision, whether to use an existing committee, form a specific Action Team, refer it to a staff member or to a volunteer.**

### **Some things to consider:**

**Who will pass the decision onto the group/person?**

**What information will they convey and what are the parameters of their responsibility?**

**What accountability does the Church Council require?**

**Is there a budget required?**



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## **An Example:**

The CC has reported a deficit budget and a group from the congregation offer to run a Market Day to raise some funds and engage the community.

The CC discusses and decides they will approve this proposal that this group will be asked to run the Market Day.

**= The Decision! (Part 1)**



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## **Part 2: How will CC ensure the decision is implemented?**

**Who will convey this decision to the group?**

**What will the group's responsibility be?**

**How will they be accountable?**

**What other considerations are there for the group? The CC can think through these elements but will leave all the actual planning to the organising committee – they don't spend time on tactics...**

- **Budget**
- **Accountability**
- **Safety**
- **Promotion**
- **Inclusion and engaging all members**
- **Date and time**



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## **Summary:**

**The Church's Mission is God's Mission of reconciliation in the world. The Church Council is responsible to ensure the congregation has engaged in a process of discerning God's call to mission and ministry in their context and then to ensure that the congregation is resourced supported, nurtured and encouraged to participate in God's Mission!**

**The Church Council lead by example in the way of Jesus – humble servants who love and offer grace to all people, who seek peace and justice in the world and reach out to the weak, vulnerable, suffering, hungry and lost to provide care, support, a hand up and God's practical, life-giving love.**



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**The Church Council is always aware that the church is Christ's Body and Christ is the Head of the Church – we belong to Christ, and we surrender our control, our power, our egos to Christ and follow his way of love!**