

22 March 2026

Our Vision and Mission: We are called to be a transformative community following Jesus, embodying the love and grace of God and seeking abundant life for all.

Therefore, we live out our vision and mission through:

- seeking forgiveness, healing and transformation for ourselves, the communities within which we live, and our world;
- acknowledging that this church is located on unceded Kaurna Land and committing ourselves to work for reconciliation among all Australians;
- resourcing and nurturing spiritual growth through worship, learning, discipleship and pastoral care;
- fostering commitment to social justice, care of creation and environmental sustainability;
- expressing worshipful creativity and witness through music and the arts;
- celebrating unity in diversity that is consistent with our essential Christian identity;
- promoting inter-faith and intercultural relationships;
- engaging and contributing to the life and public discourse of the City of Adelaide.

Context and Drivers (2025–2028)

Since the last Strategic Plan, the world and our community have continued to change. Pilgrim is called to respond with creativity, courage, and hope while recognising the challenges presented by our ageing membership profile. Key drivers shaping this plan include:

- The ongoing shift in patterns of worship and engagement, with online and hybrid forms now part of our spiritual landscape;
- Deepening calls for justice and reconciliation with First Peoples, including engaging in and leading truth-telling processes;
- Increasing urgency around the climate crisis and Pilgrim's role in advocacy and in modelling sustainability;
- World conflicts and Pilgrim's role in advocating and supporting efforts for peace;
- The changing demographics of the Adelaide City centre: opportunities to connect with residents, workers, students, commuters, visitors, and people for whom the housing crisis has an impact, especially those experiencing homelessness;
- The rapidly evolving digital environment, shaping how we communicate, connect, and witness to the wider community.

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Strategic Priorities

1. Worship

Objective

Provide diverse, theologically progressive and hospitable worship that embodies Pilgrim's values, nurtures spiritual growth, and connects with both our gathered and wider communities. This objective will be realised in different ways across each of Pilgrim's worshipping communities.

Strategies / Activities

- Explore and develop new forms of worship that respond to changing needs, including online and hybrid opportunities.
- Create clear pathways for people attending Evensong, special services, and seasonal events to connect more deeply with the Pilgrim community.
- Strengthen the role of expressive and creative arts in worship and devotional spaces to enhance faith formation.
- Collaborate with other churches and community groups to host and facilitate worship services for special occasions, needs, and public events.

Resources Needed

- Funding through the general budget, Stow Music Fund and Muriel James Fund for technology, music scholarships, flowers, print media etc.
- Participation of congregation members with relevant skills including in hospitality, music, technology, worship and leadership.

Responsibility

- Digital Presence Working Group, Ministers, Ministry Development Cttee, Music ministry leaders

Indicators of Progress

- Increasing attendance and engagement across Sunday morning worship.
- Growth in participation at Evensong, seasonal services, and community-linked worship.
- Wider recognition and use of Pilgrim's worship resources.
- Positive feedback on worship as welcoming, inclusive, creative, and spiritually nourishing.

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Strategic Priorities

2. Social Justice

Objective

Stand in solidarity with those who are marginalised, developing our public voice to advocate for justice, reconciliation, truth telling, care of creation and world peace.

Strategies / Activities

- Deepen relationships with First Peoples and grow the congregation's understanding of and participation in Indigenous issues.
- Support and advocate for refugees and people seeking asylum from conflict and oppression, working with community partners to provide practical help and encourage more just policies.
- Resource and equip the congregation to engage in social justice advocacy in the areas of peace, poverty, disability, diversity and inclusion, domestic abuse and aged care.
- Advocate and support initiatives and actions to address the climate crisis, including modelling sustainable practices, partnering with relevant networks and supporting climate refugees.
- Use our voice and public presence in the public arena to raise awareness of social justice issues through diverse media.

Resources Needed

Annual contribution of 3% of the general distribution from Pilgrim Foundation to the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

Budget allocations for justice initiatives, especially Sunday Night Tea (SNT).

External funding sources and engagement in major initiatives including SNT, Music on Flinders (MoF).

Engagement with Synod Covenanting Cttee, Uniting Church networks as well as wider networks.

Partnerships with other advocacy groups.

Responsibility

Mission Development Cttee, Walking Together Group, Pilgrim Circle of Friends, SNT and MoF leadership teams

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Indicators of Progress

- Increased congregational participation in social justice initiatives.
- Wider recognition of Pilgrim UC as a community committed to social and earth justice.
- Visible presence on the Pilgrim forecourt in support of social justice initiatives (including through special services, signage and banners and MoF.)
- Ongoing partnerships with advocacy networks, and deepened relationships with First Peoples, refugees and asylum seekers, people experiencing poverty and/or homelessness.
- Progress toward a reduction in our carbon footprint.

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Strategic Priorities

3. Strengthening the Church and Reaching Out

Objective

Strengthen Pilgrim as an open and welcoming community by nurturing faith, fostering pastoral care, promoting hospitality and building connections in the wider city.

Strategies / Activities

- Continue development of welcoming strategies and resources for people new to Pilgrim.
- Encourage and mentor new and existing members in faith development and leadership, through participation in worship services, storytelling, recitals, exhibitions, retreats, Lenten reflections, workshops and studies.
- Cultivate a community of informal and structured pastoral care including through the Elizabeth Tolhurst Bequest program, our worship communities, cluster groups and pastoral partners.
- Use our facilities and assets to build relationships with people who live and work in the City of Adelaide, including Open Church and other ministries.
- Explore ministry with children and youth in partnership with other Uniting Churches in and around the city.

Resources Needed

- Engagement of our congregation members in discipleship, hospitality, outreach and telling our story.
- Budget and Tolhurst Bequest allocation to increase the involvement of volunteers and paid staff.

Responsibility

- City Ministry Working Group, Digital Presence Working Group, Ministry Development Cttee, Music ministry leaders, Open Church volunteers

Indicators of Progress

- Increase in involvement with Pilgrim's worship and other activities.
- Evidence of deeper engagement in discipleship and leadership which may lead to membership or membership-in-association.
- Stronger partnerships with UCA and community networks.