

## **“We are the Uniting Church in Australia”**

### **Series One: Our Story**

#### **“Our Congregations”**

##### **Amelia Koh-Butler**

The mission of the church is the mission of God. Our purpose is simply to participate where God invites us to. So the mission of God is going on all the time, and it's God's work breathed into life by God, and God calls us to be a part of it different context.

##### **Phil Smith**

BELLS is a neighbourhood church that's just forming in a new real estate development on the Sunshine Coast. We started out as a barbecue church, and now there's about 45 of us gather each Sunday evening for dinner. That's our main get-together, so it's worship around the dinner table.

##### **Scott Pulfer**

It's very relaxed and casual. Feel quite comfortable to talk in amongst the actual process 'cos Phil interacts and asks you questions so it's a great environment. The warmth of the people. The realness of the people. There's nobody here with egos or pretentious. Very down to earth.

##### **Phil Smith**

Look I reckon the best part of the week for me with BELLS is Sunday dinner, and everybody's there, feet under the table. There's kids running around, older people and I sense God in that - God like a mum who's got the whole family together for Sunday dinner. And we want to find out what it is to be community, share some hospitality, hear from each other and hear from God, and find ways that we can be useful in the neighbourhood. There's a community garden we've helped establish with the local real estate developer and the community association.

##### **Lorraine Lumsden**

It was a very different church. It was more traditional. I think the thing that really impresses me with this particular church is the way it's grown. This is a church where people from any race, any culture can come and feel at home.

##### **Villiambi Pole**

It was definitely an eye-opener too to come into the multicultural church that made us feel more, more open-minded, I find the uniqueness out of this church is the openness and the welcomingness of everyone here.

##### **Noah Kim**

I believe multiculturalism is an expression of the gospel where people, although they come from different backgrounds, but in the name of Christ, they bring their uniqueness in their culture that altogether makes the church beautiful

##### **Peter Armstrong**

We know that the journey to faith is also about journey into relationship. It's journey into community. It's a church that has always asked the question, I think “How are we bringing faith and sharing faith with the next generations?”

**Nathalie Klapper**

It's a program for birth through basically school age of lots of little songs and rhymes with lots of interesting words and actions and really good developmental stuff for children and some really lovely God songs which in a very gentle way teach children about God's love.

**Nicky Wadman**

And as a mother it was a wonderful service to just come into an area where you felt safe. That also for me was the introduction to this church.

**Nathalie Klapper**

There's a prison in Albion which is a minimum security women's prison and there are children there, mostly three and under. And we started going there as an extension, kind of, of Mainly Music to do a half hour music session with the mum's and babies including lots of little nursery rhymes and songs, and to just bring again, that bonding, that warmth, that joy that you can share with your baby in that moment in time. I honestly believe that God loves us very much and our mission is to show that love. It's as simple as that.

**Mona Olsson**

I won't go into depth about past history other than that I was part of the stolen generation. God met me at the age of five, and he hasn't taken his hand off me. What I love about, love about it here is that we come into the presence of God. You know we come with hearts, every Sunday with hearts of thanksgiving regardless of what the week has thrown at us. Because I want to be more like Jesus, with a heart of love, with a heart of compassion.

**Nicky Wadman**

Look I was never brought up in a Christian family. We never went to church. And it felt strange at first, because you, you know have all of these pre-conceived ideas of what church will be like, an unfortunately they're usually not particularly positive, and this church just blew them all away for me.

I never expected that my life would turn down this path. Really. It was a surprise. Life becomes so much more full and when you wake up every day and say, "God, what have you got for me today?" It's just brought incredible happiness, and I'm getting emotional, because it is, it's the most, the biggest decision I've ever made in my life. It's the best decision I've ever made in my life.

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