

Habitat Uniting Church

Habitat Partners

Introduction

A Habitat is an environment in which things can be planted, nurtured grow and flourish, come to an end, and be turned back into the soil to nourish the new. Habitat Uniting Church mission is expressed through a spirituality centre ministry. This ministry is grounded in the Christian faith and call to link contemplation and action through personal, social and ecological transformation. There is openness in Australian culture to explore human spirituality, but a resistance to religion. Habitat seeks to provide a bridge between church and community.

It is the intention of the Habitat Uniting Church to create a hospitable, encouraging and sustainable community consisting of the *Habitat Congregation* and *Habitat Partners*.

Habitat Partner is a new way of speaking about the people, groups and organisations connected with the church who share in our values and vision but are not members of the worshipping *Congregation*. Habitat Uniting Church seeks to create opportunities for sharing in the mission and ministry of common projects.

Habitat Mission

The Habitat Uniting Church and our spirituality centre ministry is for people who:

- search for meaning,
- seek to exercise their gifts to make a difference in the world,
- and long to nourish their soul.

Understanding Partnership

Partnerships involve two or more people, groups or organisations working together to achieve something in the spirit of mutuality and collaboration, which specifies their relationship as 'partners'. The word partnership derives its meaning from 'partner' and the two Latin words '*partem tenere*' which means '*to hold part in*'. Those involved in a 'partnership' hold part of something they have in common.

Habitat Uniting Church is inviting people, groups and organisations with whom we have a relationship and common aspirations, to form an alliance in order to achieve the common goal of developing the Habitat Spirituality Centre ministry. Habitat is interested in partners who:

- Develop and offer one-off and ongoing joint ventures as part of Habitat Community Learning.
- Share human and material resources and expertise.
- Support the vision of the Habitat Uniting Church and, reciprocally, have a vision which the Habitat Uniting Church supports as complementary to its own.

Benefits of Partnership

Partnerships enhance the Habitat Spirituality Centre programs and services, creating community, foster collaboration and sharing resources. In turn, partnerships provide 'clients' with clearer pathways to access the services provided through the Centre.

The people, groups and organisations entering into partnership with Habitat will receive access to a venue, a network, advertising and the support of a community of partners possessing varying degrees of familiarity with the place, its potential and its limitations. This fosters a sharing of resources, skills and a sense of stewardship.

Partnership relationships recognize the importance of mutual care taking. For example, everyone participates in the physical maintenance of the facilities, take shared responsibility for welcoming, safety and supporting each other's events.

Eligibility for Partnership

People, groups and organisations whose values are broadly consistent with the Habitat Values and who agree with the above characteristics of partnership are welcome to become Habitat Partners.

Those interested in becoming Partners are invited to discuss partnership with the Habitat Minister and/or existing Partners. They will complete the attached Partnership Agreement Document, which will be submitted to the Habitat Spirituality Centre Committee and accepted by the Church Council.

Review and Concerns

For the relationship with partners to flourish, it is important that we cultivate respect, good communication and a clear definition of roles. Partnerships will be reviewed annually to ensure mutual satisfaction with arrangements. If a concern emerges communication will occur through the Spirituality Centre Committee to resolve matters.

Habitat Values Statement

Habitat Partners need to be committed to or complement the Habitat Values Statement.

As the body of Christ, Habitat Uniting Church Congregation and its Partners through the Spirituality Centre at Augustine are committed to:

- **Progressive theology**
We value the search for understanding and the breadth of scholarly thought. We explore questions of faith and encourage transformative learning.
- **Openness and inclusion**
We are a community of faith that speaks to all ages, is open to all beliefs and cherishes all people.
We offer welcome and hospitality, acceptance and inclusion, care and nurture.
- **Spirituality**
We nurture spiritual practice and formation, attending to the light of God in our lives.
We engage with people of other faiths and value their wisdom.
- **Creativity**
We are building a new model of church and community which invites innovation, creativity and the arts.
- **Justice**
We seek to promote social and ecological justice. We support those in need.
- **Sustainability**
We recognise our participation in the ongoing process of creation and strive to live ecologically sustainable lives.
- **Community**
We are energised by our connection with others and our partnerships with the wider community.

Habitat Uniting Church Partnership Arrangement with:

Habitat Uniting Church is committed to progressive theology, openness and inclusion, spirituality, creativity, justice, sustainability, community, and transformative learning. We invite partners to join with us to pursue our common goals.

For the relationship with partners to flourish, it is important that we cultivate respect, good communication and a clear definition of roles. The purpose of this document is to outline mutual expectations and plans. Habitat expects partners to enter into relationship as described in the Partnership Document, share our values and to bring complementary values.

This is not intended to be a legally binding document, and it does not establish a legally recognised partnership.

1. Name of individual, group or organisation

2. Stated intention of Partnership

3. Shared Values

Tick the values you share with Habitat Uniting Church and list additional values you or your organisation bring to the Partnership

- Progressive theology
- Openness and inclusion
- Spirituality
- Creativity
- Justice
- Sustainability
- Community
- Experiential and transformative
- Others

4. Contribution of Partner to Habitat Uniting Church

5. Contribution of Habitat Uniting Church to Partner

6. Financial arrangements

7. Insurance arrangements

Partners must provide proof of their own insurance arrangements unless otherwise negotiated.

Adopted by the Habitat Uniting Church Council on: (date)

Signed.....

Adopted by the Partner on: (date)

Signed.....