



# PILGRIM UNITING CHURCH

*We are called by God to be a prophetic witness in the city of Adelaide so that new life and vitality will be generated in our city and its people. We celebrate in our unity and diversity, our shared beliefs and past experiences, and value worship, teaching, creativity and justice.*

**CCP-01**

## DECISION MAKING POLICY

### 1. Introduction

The Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia determine that the Congregation and Church Council of Pilgrim Uniting Church share the decision-making required to ensure that the Congregation can fulfil its purpose as a Congregation as defined in Regulation 3.1.1 (b).

### 2. Purpose

This Policy Statement provides guidance on making decisions under the Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia and Pilgrim's vision and mission (see above).

### 3. Policy

- 3.1 All members of the Pilgrim Congregation have the right to participate in making decisions which affect their membership or role in the organisation. There should be opportunities to raise issues, share ideas, contribute to discussions, give constructive feedback and co-operate in a range of group situations (e.g. Community and Congregational Meetings, and as members of committees, task groups, special interest groups, etc).
- 3.2 Where this policy and its procedures refer to a decision-maker this implies either an individual or a group making the decision.
- 3.3 All decisions made at Pilgrim must have a focus on the following core elements:
  - 3.3.1 Acting legally and in accordance with the UCA Regulations
  - 3.3.2 Being consistent with the vision and mission of Pilgrim and Pilgrim's Strategic Plan as articulated at that particular time
  - 3.3.3 Being in the best interest of members and/or staff of Pilgrim as well as those with whom we work cooperatively and collaboratively.
- 3.4 Operational policies developed where decisions are made by the Pilgrim Church Council should articulate the criteria used for decision-making and the rationale for the Church Council's position.
- 3.5 Pilgrim Church Council reserves the right to use discretion in decision-making where circumstances are not covered by the UCA Regulations or by existing policies.

- 3.6 Decisions should be communicated as soon as practicable to all concerned.
- 3.7 All Pilgrim decision-makers are to act in accordance with this policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Clark'.

**Authorisation**

Church Council Chair

Reviewed: 15 April 2020

Next review date: April 2022

## DECISION MAKING PROCEDURES

### 1. Responsibilities

The decision-making responsibilities of the Pilgrim Congregation and the Pilgrim Church Council are delineated below. These responsibilities have been extracted from the Regulations and, in some cases, paraphrased to explain how the Regulations have been interpreted and implemented at Pilgrim.

#### Decision-making responsibilities of the Pilgrim Congregation

- 1.1 Appointing Pastoral Partners (the Pilgrim Congregation has chosen to use this terminology rather than Elders), members of Church Council, and members of other bodies as required.
- 1.2 Appointing member(s) to the Presbytery of Southern SA.
- 1.3 Making arrangements to call a Minister.
- 1.4 Ensuring that there are both facilities and resources to support the work of the Congregation with stipends being the first charge on the funds of the Congregation.
- 1.5 Advising the Church Council on property matters affecting the Congregation.

#### Decision-making responsibilities of the Pilgrim Church Council

- 1.6 Making decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of these rolls.
- 1.7 Assisting the Minister(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the sacraments.
- 1.8 Determining the time and place of services of public worship.
- 1.9 Managing the financial affairs and the general administration of the Congregation.
- 1.10 Managing and controlling property.
- 1.11 Exercising oversight of the appointment (and termination) of officers, and leaders of Congregational bodies\* set up by the Church Council to facilitate the management of the responsibilities of the Church Council.
- 1.12 Delegating specific decision-making to officers, and leaders of Congregational bodies\* set up by the Church Council to facilitate the management of the responsibilities of the Church Council.
- 1.13 Referral of matters to the Presbytery of Southern SA.

\* These bodies include the Church Council Executive, the three Standing Committees (Ministry, Mission and Operations), other committees or task groups the Church Council may appoint from time to time, the Chair of Church Council, the Ministers, and specific employees and volunteers. These delegations are indicated in the Delegations Policy (CCP-03).

## 2. Standards

There are several fundamental standards that Pilgrim decision-makers must comply with when making decisions. They are as follows:

- 2.1 Pilgrim decision-makers must have authority to make a decision. When making a decision, an authorised individual or group must make it clear that they are making the decision as a delegate on behalf of the Pilgrim Church Council. They are not making the decision in their own right.
- 2.2 Wherever possible, non-operational decisions should be made by consensus decision-making at face-to-face meetings as per the Manual for Meetings, only reverting to formal voting when consensus cannot be achieved.
- 2.3 When decisions need to be made by a group and face-to-face meetings are either not possible or not practicable, single issue decisions may be made by email responses collected from members of the group and compiled by the secretary. For more complex decision-making which necessitates exchanges of information and points of view in order to achieve consensus, available members of the group can meet together using some form of technology (e.g. Zoom).
- 2.4 Pilgrim decision-makers must act in accordance with principles of natural justice (often referred to as 'procedural fairness'), in other words giving people the opportunity to be heard and making decisions without bias.
- 2.5 A Pilgrim decision-maker must be impartial and not biased when making a decision. The decision-maker must not have any personal, financial or other interest in the outcome of a decision they make.
- 2.6 Under the Conflict of Interest Policy, a decision-maker must draw any real, apparent or potential conflict of interest to the attention of their Manager, the Chair of their committee or the Chair of Church Council and take any reasonable steps to avoid the conflict.
- 2.7 Pilgrim decision-makers must take account of relevant considerations and ignore irrelevant ones. If a Pilgrim decision-maker has information or facts that are crucial to the decision but other members of a group with whom they are making the decision might not be aware of these, the decision-maker should draw this information to their attention before the group makes the decision.
- 2.8 A Pilgrim decision-maker has a duty to make a decision that is reasonable in all circumstances.
- 2.9 A Pilgrim decision-maker must not rigidly follow policy and fail to take into account other relevant factors. Any Pilgrim policy should be used as a guide that will apply in most circumstances, but decision-makers should be aware that there may be unusual circumstances that require a more flexible approach.

- 2.10 For complex decision-making it is preferable for authorised decision-makers to have directions setting out the decision-making parameters and Pilgrim policies relevant to the matter being considered. At times this may include obtaining legal or other advice before making a decision. However, this advice cannot direct the decision-maker to reach a particular decision on a particular matter.
- 2.11 A Pilgrim decision-maker must not act in bad faith in making a decision. A commonly quoted definition of 'bad faith' is that it 'implies a lack of honest or genuine attempt to undertake the task and/or involves a lack of honesty on the part of the decision-maker'.
- 2.12 While a decision-maker may not be under a legal or moral obligation to make further inquiries, Pilgrim decision-makers will follow good practice by seeking further information when it is advisable before making a decision.
- 2.13 While Pilgrim does not always require the provision of reasons for decisions, consistent with the principles of natural justice, Pilgrim decision-makers should provide a written statement of reasons for a decision made when the decision has an adverse impact on an employee, volunteer, member or associate (individual or group).
- 2.14 An employee, member, or associate who is not satisfied with a decision made by Pilgrim may be able to object to the decision and seek a review of it.

### **3. Procedures**

- 3.1 Decision-makers should endeavour to avoid making decisions in isolation. Decisions should be articulated through policy to:
  - a) prevent the need to revisit similar issues;
  - b) ensure consistency of approach; and
  - c) reinforce the practice of decision-making according to agreed criteria.
- 3.2 Members who are unable or choose not to attend decision-making meetings may pass their views on to the meeting via a proxy, but they cannot participate in decision-making and must abide by decisions taken at the meeting.
- 3.3 A number of decision-making groups operate to support the operation and continuous improvement of Pilgrim's Ministry and Mission. Each group will have a nominated convenor. All decisions made will be recorded in writing and reported to Church Council either directly or through the Ministry, Mission or Operations Committees.
- 3.4 Decisions should be evaluated regularly to ensure they continue to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of Pilgrim's operations and its Ministry and Mission.
- 3.5 Any decision made using discretion by a Pilgrim decision-maker should be clearly documented as having been made using discretion, the reasons why existing policy was not applicable and the signature and position of the officer or convenor of the group having made the decision.

- 3.6 Consequences of all decisions will be monitored by the Pilgrim Church Council and/or sub-committee which made the decision.
- 3.7 Once a decision has been made it cannot be brought back for further discussion or review until new or different information has been obtained or before a reasonable length of time has passed.

#### **Related Documents**

- Conflict of Interest Policy (not yet written)
- **Delegations Policy (CCP-03)** – Approved by Council 10 August 2016
- **Grievance Policy (HR-01)** – Approved by Council 11 March 2020
- UCA Constitution and Regulations
- UCA Manual for Meetings
- **Decision Making Matrix Information (CCP-02)** – Approved by Council 10 August 2016
- **Decision Making Matrix (CCP-02A)** – Approved by Council 10 August 2016 as a work in progress



#### **Authorisation**

Church Council Chair

Reviewed: 15 April 2020

Next review date: April 2022