

## Section 4: Introduction to Phase 2: Collective Discernment

### June - November 2023

We have now concluded [Phase 1: Exploration](#) which has stretched through the first half of 2023 and builds on the work undertaken prior to the 16th Assembly. We have listened for the voices of the Church across the length and breadth of the country – to our diverse contexts, for our joys and sorrows, and our hopes and fears for the future.

#### **A new phase**

We have now entered into the [Phase 2: Collective Discernment](#). Between June and November 2023 we are inviting the Church into an intentional period of discernment. To begin this time the whole Church has been invited into a time of intentional prayer, [Uniting in Prayer](#). This is shaped by our patterns of discernment, which encourage prayer, worship and community building as part of any collective discernment process.

This new phase is a time for imagination. We have heard through the Exploration Phase the challenges we face and the opportunities that lie before us. In this phase we are looking intentionally at specific ideas to address our challenges and take up opportunities. Work is continuing across all workstreams.

#### **How can I engage?**

We are inviting the councils of the Church to participate in intentional discernment about the directions outlined in Section 5 as part of Workstream 1: Local Communities of Faith and Discipleship and the options outlined in Section 6 as part of Workstream 3: Governance and Resourcing. We are specifically asking councils of the Church, Church Councils, Presbyteries and Synods, to set aside time within their meetings for this discernment.

For the directions and options, we are asking you to think about:

- How might this make a difference in our context within the Church?
- How might this make a difference to our life together as a Church?
- What are the opportunities this might offer us?
- What are the risks we need to think about?
- What things would we need to think about if we implement this?

You may find there are directions and options that you are warm to and find resonate with your experience. You may also find directions and options that you are cool to or raise significant concerns. This is important and we want to hear both. You may also find that these directions and options spark other ideas for you, adaptations of existing directions or options, or totally new ideas. We want to hear this also.

#### **How can I give feedback?**

Opportunity to share discernment and feedback about the directions and options will be available from the conclusion of Uniting in Prayer on 22 June 2023. Following this, all details for engaging in Phase 2 will be found on the [Act2 website](#). Please provide your submissions and feedback to the Act2 Project as soon as you can after that and no later than 30 November 2023.

## What comes next?

At the conclusion of Phase 2: Collective Discernment we will move into [Phase 3: Recommendations for Action](#) (November 2023 - July 2024). Once we have heard from the breadth of the Uniting Church about the directions and options we will be looking to develop a way forward. The goal of Phase 3 is to have an integrated set of recommendations across all workstreams for the 17th Assembly in July 2024.

This may involve undertaking more detailed investigation of some directions and options, including expert advice, and the development of a possible implementation roadmap. Depending on the specific recommendations will depend on what further engagement or decisions are required of the wider Church.

All of this is open to the Spirit's leading and the way that emerges through the collective discernment of the Church.