



Minutes of Congregational Business Meeting

16 February 2014

1. Attendance

Paul Holdway, Alison Sampson, Ian Cook, Eliz Cook, Lindsay Nicholson, Merryl Gahan, Steven Wong Nathan Nettleton, Samara Pitt, Shelley Taylor, Jenny Gillan, Sylvia Sandeman

2. Apologies

Jan Coates, Garry Coates, Gilbert Joyce, Yvonne Joyce, Margie Welsford, Rita Wang, Lauren Wambach, Robert Toseland, Paul Gahan.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings from AGM last August

3.1. Motion: *That we now approve as an accurate record the minutes of the congregational business meeting held on 18 August 2013.*

Outcome: Approved.

3.2. Pastor's Report

Motion: *That the congregation accept the Pastor's report as tabled and thank Nathan for his work with us.*

Outcome: Approved.

3.3. Host Group Report - presented by Sylvia

Motion: *That the congregation accept Host Group's report as tabled and thank them for their work with us.*

Outcome: Approved.

3.4 Financial Report

The treasurer, Ian Cook presented the financial reports. He reported that offerings are down, especially those put in the collection bag. There has been no change to those using direct debit. Ian will put a note about offerings in church notices. Ian advised we are on balance for the budget. Superannuation is less than budgeted, but otherwise okay. No major maintenance issues for the next 6 months. Funds budgeted to build a shed in the back of the manse hasn't been used. The grate repairs had been budgeted for.

Motion: *That the Church accept the financial reports as presented and thank the Ian for his handling of our financial affairs.*

Outcome: Approved.

3.5 The Pastoral Review report has not quite been finalised and will be distributed later.

3.6 Property Report – Ian brought a verbal report

The new grate at the entrance of the car park has been installed at a cost of \$2057.55. Half of that will be invoiced to our rear neighbour whose trucks caused the damage, but he already owes

us a lot of money and we may never see it.

Repairs to barrel vacuum cleaner will cost a few hundred.

Fence repairs cost \$360.

The earth leakage system has shown a faults in lights. We can either replace inside of lights or replace whole light unit. Cheaper to replace 3 tubes x 10 ballasts is too expensive to replace.

Fluro banks may interfere with sound system.

Ian will start research into replacing light system.

The central heating unit system in the hall & manse is fine. No apparent faults.

The biggest oven in the kitchen doesn't work.

We approved reasonable expenditure to pay for new lighting system.

Motion: *That the congregation accept Property report as presented and thank Ian for his handing of our property.*

Outcome: Approved.

3.7 Mission & Direction Discussion

Update: *The Host Group has invited two BUV consultants, Chris Wanstal and Antonio Rodrigues to help the church explore the agreed questions which are:*

- *Basis of mission: How do we understand Christ's mission, and how do we engage with this understanding?*
- *Now: What mission do we currently engage in, and how do we describe it to others?*
- *Now and into the future: Could any of the mission work we are currently engaged in be extended?*
- *Future: Do church members share passions or concerns, and could these passions or concerns lead to a new focus for mission for our church?*

Information gatherers from within congregation will be identified to provide survey type questions to congregation. Chris Wanstall has been appointed to be a permanent BUV consultant.

4. Special Business

Motion that Alison take up an honorary position as associate pastor.

Summary of comments made by members:-

Ian - Delighted and supports Alison's proposed position. Admires her frankness & openness to speak up on things.

Shelley – Alison is already doing pastoral duties with blogs, preaching & children activities.

Sylvia – Alison is a gift to congregation

Nathan – Delighted to work with Alison. He needs someone to have the courage to stand up to him. There are positives to Nathan & the congregation. Alison is an excellent preacher & will be an outstanding pastor.

Eliz - She has the ability to challenge & affirm & ability to relate to people.

A Discernment Support Group will assist Alison in journey towards ordination.

Motion: *That the church appoint Alison Sampson to serve among us as an Associate Pastor under the terms and conditions laid out in the circulated Statement of Understanding.*

Outcome: Unanimously approved.

Nathan will arrange to have Roslyn Wright preside at Alison's induction service for 23 February 2014.

5. New Business

5.1. Safe Children Policy

Background: *In churches that have organised children's programs, adults responsible for the supervision of those programs are required to maintain current Working With Children Checks. We don't have such programs, but in 2007, we adopted a policy that urged all adults in the church to get the checks. This policy has proved both unpopular and unworkable.*

Proposed Policy: *Children are a gift from God to the whole congregation, and they are encouraged to worship with and relate to the whole congregation. Welcoming them, caring for them and ensuring that they are safe is a shared responsibility. Their safety is best ensured by keeping them and their activities and carers easily visible. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all to help ensure that children are never taken to or left in closed rooms or other concealed locations with any adult who is not a parent of those children, or who is not acting on the request of a parent of those children.*

Motion: *That the congregation replace its previous policy with the proposed new policy on Safe Children.*

Outcome: Approved.

5.2. Policy regarding "WWCC Interim Negative Notices"

Background: *Our pastors are required to have a current Working with Children Check, and if we were, at any time, to run any kind of organised children's program, any volunteers running such a program would similarly be required to obtain a WWCC. If a WWCC is applied for, and is likely to be refused, an "Interim Negative Notice" is first issued. The BUV recommends that Churches have a written policy dealing with the issuing of Interim Negative Notices to employees or volunteers of the church. This policy should be read, understood and agreed to in writing by those working with children in the church prior to commencing the work.*

Proposed Policy: *It is the policy of the South Yarra Community Baptist Church that any employee or volunteer of the church who is issued with an Interim Negative Notice after applying for a Working with Children Check will cease working with children and avoid being left alone with children until the matter is resolved by the Department of Justice.*

Motion: *That the congregation adopt the proposed policy regarding "WWCC Interim Negative Notices".*

Outcome: Approved.

5.3. Church Giving - discussion of possible recipients

Background: *Each year, the church gives away 10% of its facility hire income to ministries elsewhere. This is usually split between three recipients: one local, one elsewhere in Australia, and one overseas. Currently donations go to Dagoretti Corner in Kenya, the Indigenous Hospitality House, and the TransFormation program at Whitley College. A final decision on this year's recipients will be taken at the August AGM, but suggestions are invited now.*

No new suggestions were offered.

6. Next Meeting: AGM - 17 August 2014

Pastor's Report - 16 February 2014

As we settle into the new year, there are a number of new positive things developing among us.

There has continued to be some encouraging growth in numbers with some new people bringing new richness and diversity to the already interesting mix of people that make up the congregation. Some of the newer people are likely to begin the on the journey of our Catechumenate this year — the process of exploration, discernment and formation by which we share our understanding and practice of discipleship and church membership with those who are either new to Christian faith or new to our congregation.

It is my intention to attempt a thorough re-write of the study materials for the Catechumenate this year. I've been dissatisfied with it for some time. The individual bits are mostly okay, but I'm not happy with the overall structure, and have felt that the sort of vision of the basic shape of the Christian life expressed in Jesus's sermon on the mount is not sufficiently prominent in it. I've been more conscious of this just recently because our Sunday gospel readings are currently looking at the sermon on the mount. My one major criticism of the three year lectionary (cycle of Sunday Bible readings) is that it too doesn't do justice to this major chunk of Jesus's teaching. An idea was sparked for me by a few members of our congregation asking to learn more about the *Didache*, an early church document that I have often referred to in our Ancient Wisdom workshops. The *Didache* was probably written for use in a catechumenate, and it makes major use of the sermon on the mount in its first part. So what I am beginning to work on is a rewrite of our catechumenal studies using the outline of the *Didache* as the model. A lot of the material from the old studies will be re-used, but significantly edited and re-arranged. It remains to be seen whether this will work, but I am going to try to get it happening now and to keep producing the new material at a pace that enables it to be coming available at the same speed that it is being used by this year's catechumens.

I am very much looking forward to the prospect of Alison Sampson becoming part of a pastoral team with me. I am thoroughly convinced that God is calling her to pastoral ministry, and I am exciting at the prospect of seeing that ministry bud and flower among us. Alison is one person who is not afraid to stand up to me and tell me when she thinks I could have done better, and she is usually right about it, so having her working more closely with me should ultimately help me to lift my game too. Alison is an excellent preacher, and having her sharing the preaching load will help create the space to make my re-write of the catechumenal studies feasible.

I will be intrigued to see what emerges from the review of our mission and direction that we are just beginning. The assistance of the consultants from the BUV has so far enabled us to settle on some clear goals for the review, and now the real work begins. It is possible that the review could largely reaffirm our present directions and approach to mission, but I have a hunch that there may be some new things emerge from concerns and passions that already exist among us but have yet to be recognised and responded to. Time will tell.

Away from our church, I have a fairly heavy teaching load at Whitley College in the first semester of this year. I am teaching the introductory liturgical studies course that I usually teach every second year, but I also have four students doing a supervised reading course on the church year, and a two lectures to do in the Baptist History & Theology course.

Nathan Nettleton