



South Yarra Community Baptist Church

Decisions and Questions from the Host

Group Meeting

5 September 2018

Listed below are the main decisions and questions from our recent Host Group meeting. This is not the full minutes, but a summary of the main decisions and questions. In line with our church policy, these are circulated not only for your information, but to allow you to consider the decisions and ponder the questions and, if you have any concerns about any of them, to seek more information or ask for them to be reconsidered. Where possible, we will not implement the decisions for at least seven days, in order to allow time for people to respond. Questions or concerns can be raised with any member of the Host Group, or by emailing all of them at once at hosts@southyarrabaptist.church

Those in attendance at the recent meeting were Nathan Nettleton, Eliz Cook, Shelley Taylor, Ian Cook and Samara Pitt.

Summary of the Decisions and Questions

1. Our **AGM is Sunday September 16 at 2:30pm**, with lunch beforehand for those who wish to share it at the Flying Duck at 12pm. We will be discussing our **giving recipients**, and there will also be a **talking circle** to continue to hear from people about ideas for our membership and covenanting structures, and where we're going as a congregation.
2. We will be hosting a table at the **Connecting Voices conference on 13-14 October** for LGBTIQ+ Christians and allies who are committed to cultivating churches where LGBTIQ+ people are fully welcomed and accepted. If you would like to attend the conference sessions, you can buy tickets online for 1 or both days (equalvoices.org.au/conference). (Samara can provide a draft program if you want to see what's on offer.) If you just want to be at the table for people to talk to during the breaks, that's an option. We will provide some snacks for delegates (there are not many food options inside the venue) and information about our church. Please let Samara know if you are attending, are willing to be at the table for some of the time, and if you can contribute some snacks. There are conference flyers at church so feel free to promote and invite others.
3. **Church camp** was a good time! There was kite flying, artwork, opshopping, knitting, table tennis, a Sanctuary-style liturgy, a friendly and flexible cook, and the camp manager commented: *"I was mightily impressed by the inreach work being done in your group. I can see that you are answering a real need and your congregation provides a safe place for some very vulnerable souls."* Thanks to all who attended and contributed to the weekend. We plan to re-book for the same weekend (August 23-25) in 2019.
4. Our conversation about **current trends in our congregation** will continue together at the AGM. Some further questions or observations that have come up over the past month: Our recent decline in numbers has not occurred in the aftermath of a crisis (compared to other drops in the past), and the shift from an even spread of ages to a significant majority of over 50s is new for us. How do we interpret this? Where is the energy already at work amongst us? How can we encourage this? We are unlikely to initiate much local mission given the geographic spread of our congregation. How can we continue to nurture people for the work of their daily lives? How can we make known the interesting lives of discipleship already being lived out among us? We continue to seek your observations, responses and ideas!
5. Our conversation about **membership and covenanting structures** also continues! We have had some feedback on the draft that Nathan circulated. Some additional ideas that have come up:

could covenant commitments be tailored for individual people's circumstances? Can we begin some of the suggested activities anyway if people are keen, as this discussion continues? We probably can't ask those preparing for baptism to commit to more than what the rest of us are willing to do in our ongoing lives of discipleship, although we may ask for more focused attention for that period of preparation. Keep sharing your thoughts and feelings!

6. Nathan is writing a chapter on **Baptist Spirituality** for a forthcoming book on Protestant Spiritual Traditions. The deadline is less than 4 weeks away so he will be cutting back on SYCBaps work during that time.

7. **Upcoming dates for your diary:** September 16, 2:30pm AGM (Flying Duck lunch at 12pm)
October 20, 2pm Alison's ordination
November 11 Ancient Wisdom workshop
November 18 Working bee

Next meeting: 3rd October 2018, 7:30pm