



South Yarra Community Baptist Church

Decisions and Questions from the Host Group Meeting

4 November 2021

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 via Zoom were Ian Cook, Eliz Cook, Shelley Taylor, Samara Pitt, Dennis Fisher, Liesl Filippi and Nathan Nettleton.

Summary of the Decisions and Questions

1. New **Baptist Insurance** advice to all churches is that we need to get copies of Public Liability Insurance Certificates and Covid-safe plans from our hall hire clients, and that we are responsible for undertaking proper cleaning before and after each hall hire usage. We are clarifying our particular situation with Baptist Insurance, as we are not able to undertake that level of cleaning ourselves, and some of our smaller hire groups do not hold public liability insurance.
2. We are now able to start organising **physically gathered congregational activities** and the question of our approach to **vaccine mandates** needs to be considered for activities where government regulations do not specify. We recognise that limiting attendance to those who are double vaccinated or exempt (including children under 12) will exclude some of our congregation, and making activities open to anyone no matter what their vaccination status will exclude others. We also recognise that there are vulnerabilities and complexities to people's situations and opinions on this issue. For now, **for an activity where the vaccination requirement is not specified by the government, the organiser/s will need to decide whether it is A) only open to those who are double vaccinated or exempt (including children under 12), or B) open to all**, and this needs to be made clear in the event invitation.
3. As congregation members start to organise events and activities, we want to make sure that all our activities abide by our Safe Church policy. To this end, we have created a simple **event organiser checklist** that we ask event organisers to fill in and send to the host group at least one week before your event. The checklist is [available here](#) on our website.
4. **Melbourne Water's** lease has concluded and all their material has been removed and they have left the back lawn in a good state.
5. The **Baptist Union Delegates Gathering** was again held online, with minimal input from the delegates. The ecumenical **All Saints Day service** from St Martin's was also recorded and made available online.
6. The **Advent Retreat Day** will be held on Sunday 28 November as a physically gathered event (either at our church or another venue tbc), with the option of Zooming in as well. Nathan will send around a survey shortly to ask people whether it would make a difference to their

attendance if the Advent retreat is a) only open to double vaccinated or exempt people (including children under 12) only or b) open to people whose vaccination status is unknown. The host group will then make a decision about vaccination status requirements for this event.

7. A **new possibility for the manse** has emerged with BaptCare for their **Houses of Hope asylum seeker housing project**. It would only bring in about half as much money, but would be a longer term arrangement (without the workload of 3 monthly tenancies through Launch Housing) and offer possibilities of greater connection with the residents. We are making further inquiries about this option.
8. We are continuing to think about the **future of the Surrey Road property** now that our worship services are all held online. One reason to continue owning this property might be whether we have a sense of mission and call to this particular neighbourhood. Another is whether it is useful to have a physical building in which to gather that is relatively accessible, even if we have little connection to the neighbourhood. (Currently we do not do any mission activities as a congregation in the South Yarra area, and have not for a long time.) A number of congregation members have expressed that they feel connected historically and emotionally to the South Yarra property. We also recognise that while property can feel like a form of security, it wouldn't ensure the continuation of our congregation. One question to consider might be whether it is a form of risky discipleship to give up the privilege of owning property (especially such a large and expensive property) if we do not have a clear use and need for it. This is likely to be a long discernment process, and most of us encourage everyone to keep thinking about these issues. Ian registered his dissent, as he believes that there should not be any consideration of the long term future of the Surrey Road property before an appropriate process of discernment concerning our present online and live structure has occurred.
9. We intend to host the **ecumenical Epiphany service in January** as a physically gathered event at our church. We don't yet know what restrictions there will be on vaccination status and numbers allowed to attend, so will make decisions as these details become clearer.
10. Anyone is welcome to **attend a host meeting**, please let Nathan know if you wish to do so. The hosts may also invite a congregation member to attend a meeting if we feel they have insights into a particular issue on the agenda.

Dates for your diary:

Saturday at end of November <i>tbc</i>	Afternoon tea and CS Lewis with Jen and Rob Davis
Sunday 28 November	Advent Retreat Day
Thursday 2 December	Host meeting
Saturday 11 December <i>tbc</i>	SYCBaps (non-alcoholic) Beerfest
Friday 24 December 8:00pm	Our main Christmas Worship service