



South Yarra Community Baptist Church

Decisions and Questions

from the Host Group Meeting

2 December 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 Eliz Cook, Shelley Taylor, Samara Pitt, Dennis Fisher, Liesl Filippi and Nathan Nettleton. Ian Cook sent his apologies.

Summary of the Decisions and Questions

1. The hosts are feeling positive about the option of using the manse for BaptCare's **Houses of Hope asylum seeker housing project**. Nathan will email the congregation soon to summarise the proposal and respond to any questions or feedback from the congregation. If there are no objections and no one expresses a need for further congregational discernment, we will proceed.
2. Nathan will take 2 weeks of leave in the first half of January, except for the Sunday and Epiphany services.
3. A reminder that if you want to **organise an activity** for the church, to fill in the church activities assessment form on the website. It's very simple, and will just help you to think through some basic safety and inclusion questions. Remember to check current government Covid guidelines about gathering locations and numbers.
4. We are still waiting on feedback from Baptist Insurance on the **hall hire section of our Covid safe plan** regarding public liability insurance and cleaning requirements for hall hire clients.
5. We have had two **physically gathered congregational activities** in the past month, the Indigenous Hospitality House trivia night, and the Advent Retreat Day at St Luke's Abbotsford (which included a Zoom-in option.) Both of these worked very well, and we are looking forward to more!
6. There is no further progress on **training others to run online services**, this is now a 2022 project.
7. We have displayed **signage about our online services** at the church, the main sign will remain as it is for now.
8. We will host the **ecumenical Epiphany service on January 6** as a physically gathered event at our church. We believe that current Covid safe guidelines allow us to cater supper, and we will also stream the service on Zoom for members of our congregation as an experiment to how it goes, especially regarding sound quality.

9. Regarding the **relationship of our church to the South Yarra neighbourhood**, for at least the last decade, we have seen little sign of our congregation seeking to engage with the neighbourhood in any form of local ministry. Unless this changes, it means that our identity as a “South Yarra” church is increasingly just a historical memory, and this has significant implications for our thinking about the shape of our future. We are still connecting with other local churches for ecumenical services, but the future of these is uncertain and likely to be reviewed by the churches in the new year.
10. We are encouraging the congregation to continue to think about **how we can be faithful stewards of the Surrey Road property** now that our worship services are all held online. Even if we returned to using it ourselves for 3 hours a week, this would remain an important question. How can we employ the property in ways that benefit the community and reflect its value. We want to emphasise that we are not looking at selling the property, but that that option could begin to enter the conversation if we don’t see better creative ideas that emerging from the congregation over the next couple of years.
11. Following up on our congregational discussion about the **climate crisis**, Liesl is running a silent prayer of lament on Wednesdays at midday during Advent, on Zoom, contact her if you missed this email. Samara will send around an invitation to a workshop she is running at Gembrook Retreat in January called ‘Active Hope in a time of climate crisis’.
12. 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:

- Wednesday December 8, 15, 22 Silent prayer of lament for climate crisis, 12noon on Zoom
- Saturday 11 December, SYCBaps (non-alcoholic) Beerfest, at Surrey Road, 1pm, rsvp Nathan
- Friday 24 December 8:00pm Our main Christmas Worship service
- Thursday 6 January 7:00pm Epiphany ecumenical service, physically gathered at Surrey Road