



AGM Minutes

1:00pm 19 September 2021

1. Attendance & Apologies

- 1.1. Attendance - Eliz Cook, Ian Cook, Jen Davis, Rob Davis, Jill Edwards, Dom Filippi, Liesl Filippi, Lior Filippi, Tara Filippi, Dennis Fisher, John Fowler, Merryl Gahan. Paul Gahan, Acacia Nettleton, Nathan Nettleton, Suzanne Peart, Samara Pitt, Sylvia Sandeman, Shelley Taylor, Robert Toseland, Glennys Williams.
- 1.2. Apologies - Di Shearer, Gilbert & Yvonne Joyce, Rita Wang, John Sampson, Margie Welsford

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- 2.1. **Motion:** *That we now approve as an accurate record the minutes of the congregational AGM held on 20 September 2020.*
Approved
- 2.2. **Motion:** *That we now approve as an accurate record the minutes of the congregational vote held on 12 June 2021 (voting on covenants and host group).*
Approved
- 2.3. **Motion:** *That we now approve as an accurate record the minutes of the congregational vote held on 27 June 2021 (voting on future directions including online worship).*
Approved

3. Reports

- 3.1. **Host Group Report** (pages 4-5)
Motion: That the congregation accept the Host Group report as tabled and thank the Hosts for their ministry among us.
Approved
- 3.2. **Pastor's Report** (pages 6-7)
Motion: That the congregation accept the Pastor's report as tabled and thank Nathan for his ministry among us.
Approved
- 3.3. **Membership Report** (page 8)
Motion: That the congregation accept the Membership report as presented with the changes noted, and thank Shelley for maintaining these records for us.
Approved

4. Financial Reports

- 4.1. **Financial Report for the 2020-2021 financial year** (page 9)

Motion: That the Church accept the financial reports for the past year as presented.

Approved

4.2. Budget for the 2021-2022 financial year (page 10)

Motion: That the church endorse the budget for the 2020-2021 financial year as presented.

Approved

5. Matters for Voting

5.1. Membership Invitations

Motion: That we invite Audrey Kateena, James Bennett, Jeff Wild, Margie Dahl, Tseyi Okorodudu, and Rob & Jen Davis to become official members of our church, and if they accept, to confirm them into the membership of the congregation by reaffirmation of their baptismal vows at suitable dates to be set.

Approved

5.2. Recipients of our Annual Giving

Background: Each year, the church gives away 10% of its facility hire income to ministries elsewhere. This is split between four recipients: one local, one elsewhere in Australia, one overseas, and one related to asylum seekers.

Motion: That we give away 10% of our facility hire income for the past year and split it between the following four recipients:

- *Partners Relief & Development* who are working with children and families fleeing from Burma, and who are recommended to us by YarZar;
- the *Indigenous Hospitality House*;
- *Sanctuary* at Warrnambool;
- *RISE* (Refugees, Survivors and Ex-detainees), the first refugee and asylum seeker organisation in Australia to be run and governed by refugees, asylum seekers and ex-detainees.

Approved

5.3. Electing BUV Delegates

Motion: That the congregation endorse John Fowler and Ian Cook as our delegates to the BUV Assembly Gatherings, and Merryl Gahan and Shelley Taylor as back-up delegates.

Approved

5.4. Re-adoption of our Church Constitution

Background: Our current church constitution was written and adopted five years ago, and it requires that it be “reviewed by a church meeting no more than five (5) years after adoption, at which time it should be amended and readopted or replaced.” With the current changes in the way we operate, there may be reason to rewrite it in the next few years, but there is nothing in it that is not workable at present, so there is no need to rush it. Thus the Host Group recommend that it be readopted unchanged. This would mean the it would have to be reviewed again in another five years if we had not replaced it by then.

Motion: That the congregation readopt, unchanged, the church constitution that was adopted on 11th September 2016.

Approved

6. Necessary Tasks

Explanation: There are numerous people who contribute their time and labour to carry out the various tasks necessary to the ongoing operation of our common life, prayer and ministry. Many of these tasks are largely invisible, and are barely noticed unless they are not done. There are always some that are overlooked when we make up the list, so we add to the list in the meeting. These are not elected positions, and the fact that people are named as doing them does not mean that no one else can express interest in taking on the tasks. In most cases, the people doing them would welcome help, and in some cases they would love to hand the tasks over completely. There are some people who are doing too many of these tasks, and we would love to see them shared around more equally. So if this list prompts you to think, “I could do that one day,” don’t be afraid to communicate that thought to the Hosts or the person presently in the role.

Treasurer: Ian Cook

Bank Account Signatories: Nathan Nettleton, Shelley Taylor, Samara Pitt

Correspondence secretary: Shelley Taylor

Bill payments: Shelley Taylor

Hall Hire Bookings and Invoicing: Eliz Cook

Minute Taker for Host Meetings: Samara Pitt

Music Copyright reporting: Margie Welsford & Samara Pitt

Building maintenance: Ian Cook

Grounds, Lawns and Garden Maintenance: John Fowler

Camp Committee: Shelley Taylor, Eliz Cook

Hosting Daily Prayer Liturgies: Nathan Nettleton, Samara Pitt, Acacia Nettleton, Ian & Eliz Cook, Shelley Taylor, Jeff Wild, Marion Green (more welcome)

Singers for Recordings: Liesl Filippi, Shelley Taylor, Samara Pitt, Acacia Nettleton, Nathan Nettleton, Margie Welsford, Ian Cook, Merryl Gahan, Jen Davis, Jeff Wild (more welcome)

Weekly update of the slides for the daily prayer services: Jeff Wild & Nathan Nettleton

Any of the following tasks could be taken on by others

Sourcing and collating the readings for daily prayers: Nathan Nettleton

Compiling the weekly notice sheet: Nathan Nettleton

Editing the recordings of sermons and services and uploading them to our websites: Nathan Nettleton

Updating the allocation of parts for the Sunday liturgy and emailing it out to the congregation during the day on Sunday: Nathan Nettleton

Preparing, coordinating and mixing of the sung response recordings for our worship services: Nathan Nettleton

Motion: That the congregation endorse all those who do the necessary tasks for our Church and thank them for their service during the past year.

Approved

7. Listening Circle

The following question is for exploration using a “listening circle” approach to hear what feelings, thoughts and ideas might be emerging around it.

7.1. From your perspective, what are the underlying problems that have created the climate crisis, and how are you feeling about it?

In the listening circle, we hope that everyone will have the chance to name the problem as they see it, and give voice to the complex feelings associated. We hope this might be the first step to more consciously carrying this issue as a whole congregation. It may also help us to identify natural groupings of people with shared concerns and passions, and assist us to move to practical actions in small groups, and for Nathan and others to address the pastoral/theological implications of where everyone is at. However, one step at a time!

Most people present contributed their thoughts and feelings to a very worthwhile sharing. It is hoped that more conversations will emerge from this over coming weeks and months.

8. Next AGM: 18 September 2022

Host group report for AGM 2021

The **Host Group in 2020 – 2021** has consisted of Eliz Cook, Ian Cook, Uncle Dennis Fisher, Samara Pitt and Shelley Taylor, with Liesl Filippi joining us in April and Nathan Nettleton as pastor and chair. We have continued to meet over Zoom, currently at 7pm on the first Thursday of the month.

Being hosts of the feast has been a different experience in the past 12 months! The constraints on gathering brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic helped us to face our own future as a gathered community and what this might look like in light of our experiences of online worship. This year marks a significant shift for SYCBaps as we made the decision in June to become a church community where worship and governance happens online, alongside physical and online gatherings for other activities.

The **process of discernment** using listening circles, discussion papers, written proposals and Open Space gatherings was slow, care-full, prayerful and hopeful. We are grateful to everyone for the open spirit in which discernment was undertaken, and the willingness to listen to others with different perspectives.

We also acknowledge the work put in by everyone to **learn new technologies**, including Zoom and Discord, and Nathan's commitment to teaching these skills so that everyone can participate fully. This will also enable us to share the workload of the Sunday service so Nathan can have leave without needing to return for Sundays. This confidence in handling the technology has contributed to our decision to start opening up the Sunday service to first time visitors without the need for them to contact us first. We are still working on some of our **Zoom etiquette**, in particular the need for two or more people who are Zooming in from the same location to remain muted unless they are speaking to the group, so that comments between two people do not intrude on the general conversation.

By Easter 2021, we had a full set of online liturgies and our practice of gathering online for the Sunday eucharist has become routine. **Daily prayers** continues to be an important space for people to check in and share how they are going. We have a range of preachers and attendees (the '**connected diaspora**') joining us from overseas and interstate. We even hosted the Australian premiere of the documentary film ***What? I Married a Pastor?*** made by Kim Youngoak whose husband Craig was a regular attendee at our Sunday service from South Korea. Nathan attended two international conferences from his lounge room (although he did have to change timezones) and others were able to participate in some aspects of the Baptist World Alliance Congress. We continued to participate in **South Yarra ecumenical services**, which have been online or in person depending on Covid restrictions.

Several people have experimented with gathering together at the church property or in another person's home to participate in the online service together. This **spirit of experimentation** has been an enlivening feature as we begin to explore community gatherings in person alongside our worship life online.

We had several **community gatherings in person**. Uncle Den again hosted an Invasion Day discussion at the church, and our Lenten retreat day was also held there, with one person attending via Zoom. Our Lent reading was 'Finding Sanctuary' by Christopher Jamison. We enjoyed the Resurrection brunch on Herring Island. We have started to see smaller activities organised by congregation members, such as the Buddha's Day and Multicultural Festival at Federation Square. Covid lockdowns have limited these opportunities, and the most impressive turnaround was the **church camp** weekend. With Tara's determination to not miss

out on camp for two years in a row, we saw a range of online activities organised, including origami, book reading, visual picnic, and knit and natter.

In **building matters**, the manse tenants were evicted in February after their 3 month lease through Homeground extended to more than 12 months. Former congregation member David Jackson and his family moved into the manse for a couple of months upon their arrival back in Australia from Sweden. Cleaning between tenants was a big job which has raised some questions about the viability of continuing a program of 3 month tenancies. At this stage we have agreed to continue with Homeground but new tenancy compliance requirements means we have some additional maintenance to do before we can resume leasing the manse. Melbourne Water began leasing the church's rear garden space for 6 months from May to do drainage works on Surrey Road. We acknowledge John Fowler's faithful work keeping the garden looking good as hall hirers return to the building.

I will finish with two quotes from our annual review. Jenny wrote 'I find SYCBaps inclusive, consultative, imaginative and welcoming.' Margie D wrote: 'Prayer has gone from something rushed and superficial to something that shapes my life.' No doubt we have much ahead of us that is uncertain, but let us take these experiences on board and follow Jesus into whatever paths might be opening up for us in the coming year.

Samara Pitt, on behalf of the Host Group
September 2021

Nathan's Pastoral Report - AGM 19 September 2021

What a huge year! This time last year, we were deep in Melbourne's 16 week lockdown, and we were feeling quite positive about the way we had adapted to being church under lockdown conditions. We were just beginning to get our heads around the likelihood that lockdown conditions might be with us, at least intermittently, for a long time to come. Since then we've gone through a lengthy respite of several months with almost no COVID in Melbourne, but now a new wave has us back in another long lockdown.

It is clear that the current long lockdown is weighing on people more heavily than last year's. While our online congregational life is providing us with a level of support that many other people don't have, the fatigue, the deprivations, and the diminishing sense of progress affect nearly everyone. When we are stressed and fatigued, we tend to become more impatient and fractious with one another. Let's try to remember to be kind, to be patient, to keep talking, to keep forgiving, to keep up the patterns of prayer and self-care that sustain us. This too shall pass.

At this time last year, we were already beginning to recognise that some of the new patterns of church life, born of lockdown, would need to be continued even if and when lockdowns are a thing of the past. We had recognised that gathering for daily prayer liturgies on Zoom was something that we would be keeping, because it filled a need that we had never previously found a way to fill. And we were beginning to wrestle with questions about our Sunday worship and how we might be able to return to the church building while continuing to enable people to connect into it from remote locations so as not to leave behind the significant chunk of the congregation for whom regathering physically in South Yarra wasn't an option.

What we hadn't yet seriously considered was the possibility of choosing never to return to physically gathered worship in the church building. But as we moved into 2021, even through the COVID-free months, that possibility began to seem more and more like something we needed to seriously consider. We began to recognise that one of the things that is most valued about our worship, the all-inclusive pattern of participation, was something that worked very well in a church building, and very well online, but which would be very difficult to achieve in a hybrid service. As we wrestled with that, and experimented with ways of making it work as best we could, it became apparent that we no longer had enough people who were committed to gathering in the church building regularly to make the physically gathered half of the hybrid work, even if we could solve the technical challenges.

So after a long period of experiment, reflection, discernment, and listening to one another, in June we voted on a proposal from the Host Group to embrace, for the foreseeable future, a pattern of church life in which worship would continue to happen online. It was one of those decisions where the processes enabled people to feel sufficiently heard that they felt able to vote against their own preferences, recognising that God seemed to be calling us to something that we didn't necessarily all want. The vote in favour of the proposal was a unanimous yes. I can't remember ever even hearing of a unanimous vote in a church on an issue as big as that before. I hope we never take for granted the culture of trust and cooperation we have managed to build, because it is a rare thing. I feel very proud to be part of it.

With any major decision like this, the proof is in the pudding, but in this case, the pudding is still some way off. As long as we are still living with emergency lockdowns, we won't really be in a position to judge for sure how this works and feels when many other things have returned to some semblance of pre-pandemic normal. We have, however, seen that through those months of respite, this continued to work well for us. Sunday attendance has been strongest during lockdowns, but this probably reflects the lack of competing alternative activities rather than any dissatisfaction with the online worship. I had thought that the strong attendance at our online daily prayer liturgies might reflect a particular need in lockdown and that it would wane when we weren't in lockdown, but that didn't happen.

However, there is another half to our roadmap for our church future, and that is our non-worship community activities, many of which we hope to enjoy in physically gathered forms. Having gone back into lockdown so soon after our decision, this important part of the pudding is still awaiting its proof. Much of the health of our church as we move into the future is likely to depend on how we go with making this happen.

I want to flag two big related questions that flow from the decision we made in June, and which are slowly becoming more apparent as time goes by. They are our relationship with our former neighbourhood, the wider South Yarra community, and our relationship with the property and buildings we own but no longer make much use of there. Neither of these questions come with deadlines, let alone urgent ones, but they have costs in terms of relevance and workload, and so they will nag at us until we address them.

The question of our relationship to the South Yarra community has been one we have wrestled with on and off for decades. The neighbourhood has significant needs, but most of us don't live in it or spend much time

in it. The existence of needs alone does not constitute a call; for that there needs to personal passion and commitment as well. A few people have spoken to me about how important they consider it to be that we maintain an active engagement with the needs of the neighbourhood, but when I've pressed them on the ways they wanted to personally get involved, they've admitted that it was something they hoped others would make happen. So it seems to me that while a number of us have a longstanding belief that all churches should engage in mission in a local neighbourhood, in practice we don't actually have anyone with a sense of call and passion to make that happen in the South Yarra neighbourhood. As we have often noted, we do have numerous people who are actively involved in valuable forms of mission elsewhere, but these things are neither local to South Yarra nor being done under the auspice of our church. Unless we see a surge of people among us wanting to drive new forms of engagement with the South Yarra community, then at some point we may need to face the question of whether we have, in fact, left the neighbourhood. That would have implications for our name, and for our relationship with the other South Yarra churches.

The question about the property and buildings we own in South Yarra is related to the previous question, but is even more complicated because there is significant money involved. The simple version of the question is, "if we are no longer using the property ourselves, is there any good reason to retain ownership and/or management of it?" However, for at least as long as I have been a part of this church, our budget has depended on the income the property earns us from hiring out the hall, the manse and the car park. The problem though is that that income doesn't come without work. The property, buildings and relationships with with hirers need to be managed and maintained. Those tasks now fall mainly to Ian, Eliz, John F, and to a diminishing extent, me. What I'm noticing in myself (perhaps it is true for the others too) is that I am losing energy for the property. It now feels to me like something that is just a source of problems that demand and divide my attention. I mostly only go there now when there is a property problem needing attention. And the work done there, which in theory is done on behalf of the rest of us, feels increasingly thankless because most of the rest of the congregation never even see it. John has been doing a fabulous job of maintaining the gardens, but how many of us see and enjoy them regularly? So if the property is just chewing up our energies, I wonder whether there might be alternatives. This is purely speculative, because I've done no research, but two possibilities come to mind. If we sold the whole property, would the investing the proceeds provide us with a comparable income? Or might the Stonnington City Council be interested in taking a long term lease on the property to manage it as a community facility (in which we might occasionally hire a meeting space ourselves)?

These issues are not at all urgent, but they are certainly appearing over the horizon, so I'm naming them here to stimulate thought and conversation.

Finally, as is my usual practice, I am providing a breakdown of my hours for the year to date. As always it comes with some necessary explanations and disclaimers. For example, it shows an average of just over 4

2021 Church Hours

	Total	Average
Church Activity Work	13h 8m	0h 24m
Sermon Preparation	137h 9m	4h 5m
Visiting Preacher Correspondence	26h 30m	0h 47m
Liturgy planning/design/writing	169h 47m	5h 4m
Liturgy routine preparation	215h 2m	6h 25m
Liturgy music preparation	278h 47m	8h 19m
Group pastoral contact	122h 47m	3h 40m
1-on-1 pastoral contact	95h 10m	2h 50m
Pastoral Emails & Letters	31h 16m	0h 56m
Communications & Correspondence	76h 46m	2h 17m
Website Maintenance	76h 15m	2h 16m
Administration Tasks	77h 26m	2h 19m
Meetings (Internal)	40h 2m	1h 12m
BUV & BWA work	23h 11m	0h 41m
SWERNI work	0h 14m	0h 0m
Professional Development	25h 3m	0h 45m
Strategic Planning & Design	90h 30m	2h 42m
Reading & Research	29h 43m	0h 53m
Writing Projects	4h 54m	0h 9m
Practical Tasks	48h 38m	1h 27m
Work Travel Time	19h 46m	0h 35m
Providing Training	2h 36m	0h 5m
Average Total Hours (30h 24m paid)		47h 52m
Attendance at Worship, Prayer, etc	374h 36m	11h 11m
Related Work Paid by Others	19h 13m	0h 34m

hours per week on sermon preparation. Writing a new sermon usually takes me around 10-12 hours, but I don't preach every week, and when I do, I sometimes preach an updated revision of a previous sermon, so the 4 hour figure is the average of these significant variations.

Website maintenance normally takes about 10-15 minutes a week, but over the last year and a half, I completely rebuilt the ageing LaughingBird site. That time consuming project is now finished.

Liturgy Music Preparation is quite a high figure, but it is one that will gradually tail off, even if no one else wants to take any of it over. The first time a song or psalm refrain is used in our online worship there is quite a lot of work in preparing guide tracks for our singers, mixing their recordings, and preparing the slides. The next time that piece is used, there is almost no work at all.

That principle has been true of a lot of things in the past 18 months, and that explains much, but not all, of why my actual hours have been about 50% higher than they are supposed to be. But truth be known, I have thrived on the challenges of this period, and I'm not resenting the demands. It is a privilege to be your pastor, and to give it my best.

Nathan Nettleton

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – South Yarra Community Baptist Church
- As at AGM on 19 September 2021

Over the last 12 months, our overall membership has remained the same, but the list of covenanting members has slightly changed. Jill Edwards has become a covenanting member again. Suzanne Peart did not covenant and so moves to the list of members on the reserve roll.

2020 Statistics (AGM)
28 Members Total

2021 Statistics (AGM)
28 Members Total

These changes leave the following as the Membership Roll proposed for approval by the meeting:

Members Covenanted for the Current Year - 21

Eliz Cook	Merryl Gahan	John Sampson
Ian Cook	Paul Gahan	Sylvia Sandeman
Jill Edwards	Gilbert Joyce	Di Shearer
Dom Filippi	Yvonne Joyce	Shelley Taylor
Liesl Filippi	Acacia Nettleton	Margaret Welsford
Dennis Fisher	Nathan Nettleton	Rita Wang
John Fowler	Samara Pitt	Glennys Williams

Members on the Reserve Roll - 7

Cameron Cutts	Suzanne Peart	Robert Toseland
Paul Holdway	Alison Sampson	
Mark Moroney	John Stanshall	

We currently have two Junior Catechumens:

Junior Catechumens

Lior Filippi	Tara Filippi	
--------------	--------------	--

Shelley Taylor,
Membership Secretary
12 September 2021

Profit & Loss [Budget Analysis]

July 2020 To June 2021

ABN: 15 739 517 700

	Selected Period	Budgeted
Income		
Offerings	\$45,899	\$39,000
Car Park Rental	\$28,166	\$29,600
Hall Hire	\$4,601	\$0
Manse Rental (Nett)	\$12,189	\$0
Laughingbird Gifts	\$1,856	\$0
Easter Sunday Cruise	-\$279	\$0
Interest Received	\$303	\$500
Jobkeeper & Other Subsidies	\$35,368	\$19,500
Fund Income		
Other Gifts	\$2,000	\$0
Total Income	\$130,104	\$88,600
Gross Profit	\$130,104	\$88,600
Expenses		
Employment Expenses		
Wages & Salaries	\$67,671	\$69,000
Superannuation	\$8,157	\$8,200
Long Service Leave	\$1,140	\$1,150
Workers' Compensation	\$470	\$400
Insurance	\$3,707	\$3,700
Gifts	\$4,600	\$4,600
Dues & Subscriptions	\$307	\$0
Signs & Marketing	\$100	\$0
Maintenance Church	\$170	\$1,000
Computers	\$315	\$0
Maintenance Manse	\$4,994	\$1,000
BUV Contributions	\$3,508	\$3,600
National Abuse Redress Scheme	\$575	\$0
Cleaning	\$2,009	\$3,200
Utilities Manse	\$431	\$500
Utilities Church	\$1,338	\$2,000
Worship Resources	\$2,678	\$1,500
Office Expense	\$156	\$200
Pastoral supervision	\$1,047	\$1,000
BUV Dinners & functions	\$100	\$150
Website Expenses	\$243	\$0
Property Taxes	\$1,084	\$1,100
Total Expenses	\$104,802	\$102,300
Operating Profit	\$25,302	-\$13,700
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$25,302	-\$13,700

Profit & Loss [Budget Analysis]

July 2021 To June 2022

ABN: 15 739 517 700

	Budgeted
Income	
Offerings	\$46,000
Car Park Rental	\$27,000
Hall Hire	\$6,000
Manse Rental (Nett)	\$13,000
Interest Received	\$600
Fund Income	
Other Gifts	\$2,000
Total Income	\$94,600
Gross Profit	\$94,600
Expenses	
Employment Expenses	
Wages & Salaries	\$69,000
Superannuation	\$8,400
Long Service Leave	\$1,200
Workers' Compensation	\$500
Insurance	\$3,800
Gifts	\$3,270
Dues & Subscriptions	\$607
Signs & Marketing	\$200
Maintenance Church	\$670
Computers	\$500
Maintenance Manse	\$2,000
BUV Contributions	\$3,500
National Abuse Redress Scheme	\$575
Cleaning	\$3,000
Utilities Manse	\$431
Utilities Church	\$1,000
Worship Resources	\$3,000
Office Expense	\$100
Pastoral supervision	\$1,000
BUV Dinners & functions	\$200
Website Expenses	\$250
Property Taxes	\$1,100
Total Expenses	\$104,303
Operating Profit	-\$9,703
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$9,703