

Annual Church Meeting

Thursday 28 November 2024

Chair: Peter Fazio

Scribe: Sophie Brodie

Partner count: 118 - Quorum established at 7:55 pm

Present in Person: 83

Present via Proxy: 35

Present on Zoom (no voting online): 26 People online (not necessarily partners)

1. Welcome

2. Prayer

3. Worship

4. Appointment of Meeting Officers and Meeting Admin

Introduced by Margaret Thompson (CLT Chair) who explained the process of voting and how to do proxy.

- Peter Fazio appointed as Chair
- Sophie Brodie appointed as scribe
- Drew Coulson, Lisa Coulson and Terry McKeown and Bronwyn Thornton as scrutineers appointed.

All approved, none against.

Quorum established by 7:55pm

5. Review Minutes of 2023 Annual Church Meeting

2023 Minutes – Item to be addressed

Comments on the error in the original minutes sent out - referring to the costs for Sunshine hostel. Correct information was sent out in the email on Tuesday 26 November.

Questions?

No

Voting Process- Accepting the Minutes

Scott Morrison affirmed the record of last meeting notes were true.

Andrew Scipione seconded.

No comments or questions.

None against, motion approved.

6. 2024 Looking Back on the year– Church Reports

a. Scott shared on the church reports and summarised as:

- Please see the attached [church reports](#)

- Scott has been reminded that God is doing something beautiful in the church in Australia that is creating real transformation and lives being changed
- Our church has witnessed yet again the faithfulness of God, and expressed faithfulness to God
- We haven't simply recovered but have moved forward as a church, which is encouraging
- The metrics that are most compelling in looking back is that:
 - we are a more prayerful people
 - return to innovation and preparedness to try (examples are Being With Course, Coffee Connect)
 - return to storytelling
 - a greater depth to the leadership of our church especially in our young people
 - the flourishing of our young people
 - Our regard from the community due to Life Care and the connections they are making
 - People from all nationalities finding belonging and connection here at GRLC
 - A healthy and unified church governance and staff team
 - Return to financial health, in what was a radical turnaround from July.
- Scott is encouraged by the church we are and the church we are going to become

b. Matter for Noting – Constitution

- It has been an important year in reflecting on our finances
- We are working towards setting clear targets to ensure long-term financial stability for the Church by establishing specific goals for wages and the building sinking fund over the next three years to five years.
- As part of this process, the Finance Committee reviewed our constitution and identified that our current practices, particularly around the use of rental income, is unclear. The constitution's clauses could be interpreted in ways that seem contradictory.
- Rather than seeing this as a problem, this discovery highlights how much we have grown as a church since the constitution was first written. It provides an opportunity to bring the document up to date, so it better reflects our current practices and needs.
- We sought advice from Baptist Association and they agreed it was worth setting practical financial targets over the next three to five year to bring us into alignment with accepted financial standards while maintaining the stability of ministries and staff and conducting a comprehensive review of the constitution over 2025 to modernise the language, remove overly operational clauses and ensure it supports effective governance rather than hindering day-to-day operations
- Any changes to the constitution will be brought to the 2025 ACM to be voted with a 75% majority.

c. Katharine shared on Property Update:

Our tenants

- We still have our current tenants, and there have been no changes there.
- Unit 2, McCains Furniture is on a 3 year lease expiring in April 2026
- All other tenants are month to month lease.

Sunshine Hostel

- The new dormitory structure is in place

- Still requiring a fit out and maintenance and extensions were also completed on the boy's dormitory.

Questions for Property:

No comments or questions

d. Katharine shared on **Financial Reports (2023 audit report and 2024 finance update)**

- [Auditors report](#) mentioned – no significant issues raised with that
- There was an slight error on the Tenants Rent in the 2024 budget and 2024 projections. These were resent to Partners on Tuesday prior to the meeting.
- We have already reached our giving target in the middle of November, and still have the rest of the year to go
- We have seen a number of new givers, and a significant of people who have increased their giving
- Please refer to the detail in the [financial report](#)
- The projections shared are based on the numbers at 31 October so we can already let you know that we haven't spent as much as what was projected.
- Projections at the end of October predicted a surplus of \$82 340 (originally budgeted a \$70 754 deficit) however this surplus is likely to be higher by year end.
- Kath spoke into the reserves and the 2024 projections
- We have sent \$3000 to each of Baptist Mission Australia, Zoe, LEBC to help with the floods that were happening in Northern Thailand

Questions for Finance reports:

Julie Stevenson – We were running a deficit budget, can I get clarity if the numbers you are speaking about were a surplus?

Yes, it means its \$170 000 more than we expected

Philip Moore – We had \$600 000 in our various accounts last year, is that the same as this year?

Yes – it's about at \$650 000 as of Monday

Philip Moore – What about the interest rates? Are we utilising the high interest rates? *Yes interest for this year will be around \$20,000 which is much higher than even last year. I'm anticipating that interest rates will drop a little next year so have budgeted more conservatively for next year.*

Kath to write what her answer was.

Philip Moore – Have we stuck to one institution?

No. We've tried to maximise the government's bank guarantees. We have a \$250,000 term deposit with one institution and a chunk of money with BFS (Baptist Financial Services). With two term deposits. They support the Baptist movement and since covid the FC felt the risk was lower having funds held here whilst they are not covered by the government guarantee.

Braddon Wheeler – I am unsure about the numbers and reflecting the bottom line there?

Thanks. I'll have a look. I know the projected surplus is correct!

Post meeting note: *The figures displayed in the meeting had not been updated to reflect the corrections sent to Partners on Tuesday. The figures presented in the 2025 budget were correct.*

Mitch Hope (online) – Why is the PK site costs half of what we budgeted?

This is just because we didn't spend as much, the Worship and Creative teams is funds.

Post meeting note: \$5,000 of the unspent worship equipment budget will move into the Worship equipment sinking fund. This was displayed at the meeting, but not specifically spoken into.

Voting Process- Accepting the Church Reports

Taryn Pascoe affirmed the 2024 church reports

Alison Dye seconded.

None against, motion passed.

7. Thank yous

Scott and Kath finishing in their roles early next year and we prayed for them.

We will be celebrating Scott on Sunday 2 Feb

We will be celebrating Kath on last Sunday in Feb

We also acknowledged that Alison Dye is finishing up her time on CLT

8. CLT Affirmation

- In the new year, our CLT will be looking to appoint someone new from our Chipping Norton site to replace Alison Dye.

- We are affirming current members through our paper voting system.

Voting Process- Collection of pages

All CLT nominations passed with majority (109).

9. Senior Pastor Transition Plan

a. Resolution to approve the Senior Pastor Transition Plan

- This refers to the [Senior Pastor Transition Plan](#).

- We initially proposed an internal selection process, due to our rich pool of accredited pastors in our church and knew that an internal appointment would strongly promote our current mission and vision, one of our main guiding principles in this process.

- After receiving feedback from our first Q&A, it was suggested by some of our candidates to open up to external applicants of GRLC.

Questions?

No

Voting Process- Accepting the Minutes

Kathryn Van Dyke to approve the Senior Pastor Transition Plan.

Malcolm Campbell seconded.

No comments or questions.

None against, motion approved.

b. Pastoral selection team nominees

- This refers to the [Information pack](#) on these Nominees

Voting Process- Collection of pages

All PST nominations, new and continuing, passed with majority (100 in favour)

10. 2025 Plans

a. Ben shared on **Looking Forward:**

- The Senior Pastor Transition Process will be a significant part of next year
- We need to intentionally pursue unity and commit with one another in love to not give the enemy a foothold on a time that could cause division
- Philippians 2:2
- Let's partner in to God's mission too, as the Senior Pastor transition is not all that will be happening
- On one level we will continue our vision of disciple-making communities growing along the Georges River and beyond revealing the love and life of Jesus for today impacting thousands of lives for eternity. For another year, as this is what God is inviting us into afresh for a new year.
- Let's be building an anticipation that the Spirit of God is at work, transforming lives.

A snapshot on some 2025 focuses as we look to continue to live out our vision:

1. Becoming a people of Prayer

- Hearing from God practical series
- Multiple prayer weeks
- Prayer Rooms

2. Multi-site vision

- We continue to look to how to prepare for a third site, however it has slowed a little as we focus on our transition.
- Leadership pipeline
- Life Care + Life Church strategy alignment
- Visiting CN Site and CN site will be moving to a weekly presence at Nuwarra Public School

3. Discipleship: Going Deeper

- Ephesians Series
- Opt-in spiritual practice groups
- New courses on relationships + new to faith
- Youth and YA Camp, Dinners, and Kids Connect

b. 2025 Budget

- Referring to the [proposed 2025 budget](#)
- We have plans to begin putting measures in place in regards to the Note on the constitution, but due to the Senior Pastor transition, we have some one off costs.
- We have provisioned for a Lead Pastor for all of 2025, and a full time Senior Pastor from July and that will not continue to 2026.
- Giving target set to \$1 million
- Provided for Building Depreciation
- Increased the provision for building maintenance (\$50K)
- Balanced Budget (with potential for up to a \$40K surplus)

Questions for 2025 Budget:

[Robyn Burgess – What is the \\$6000 for the Chipping Norton property?](#)

At the moment we get Nuwarra Public School for free, but this is a a buffer in case that doesn't happen or if they want to rent an office space

[Stephen Davies – Have we considered having a charging station at church?](#)

It has been raised before but it's not in any short term or immediate plans.

Virginia Lamb – What does the future of the finance committee look like with Kath and Kevin stepping down?

We are looking for people to join this and is on the CLT agenda for 2025.

David Walker – Can you explain the depreciation of the building?

As the building ages, we need to account for the de-valuing of it and the depreciation amount comes off the value of the building each year.

Phil spoke to this too. Similar to machinery where you depreciate the cost of the item over years, rather than expending the full cost in the year purchased, we need to depreciate the value of the building over time.

Kevin Lane – I have already discussed with Kath the risk in things like storms, and would our Baptist Insurance pay for that. She confirmed the insurance would. We also have the possibility or probability that we can draw back again our loan in the case of a pinch.

Richard Tapp – Ongoing on the building depreciation discussion, is our building consider an asset and the land value too?

Yes on our balance sheet the land and building are valued separately. Each year we update the land value using the Valuer General website.

Voting Process- Accepting the 2025 Budget

Matthew Gray approve 2025 Budget.

David Russell seconded.

2 against, majority made, motion passed.

11. Announce results of CLT affirmation and PST result

All CLT nominations passed with majority (109) and PST nominations passed with majority (100).

These results have been copied into each of the appropriate items there as well.

12. Prayer in groups

13. Close

Any other business?

Virginia Lamb – With the Pastoral Selection Team and those who have conflict of interest, like there are two members with family members who are eligible to apply. How will it be dealt with if they have to come off?

Margaret answered: It was in the Partners information pack that if any of the member of the Pastor Selection Team need to step down – not just because their family member applies for the SP role, it could be due to other reasons. The CLT has the ability to nominate a similar person to replace them to ensure the process is not slowed down.

Meeting closed at 9:41pm