

# The Synod of Eastern Australia



To meet at the  
Taree Church Facilities  
Manning River Congregation  
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

**7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

## **Standing Committee Reports**

“God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us,  
That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.”

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## TIMETABLE FOR SYNOD 2019

Time	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> May	Time	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> May	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> May
	<b>Synod to Commence with Session 1 at 4.30pm</b>	9.00am	<b>SESSION 3</b> Devotions and Prayer	<b>SESSION 6</b> Devotions and Prayer	<b>SESSION 9</b> Devotions and Prayer
		M/Tea 10.30am	Presbytery Reports  Law and Advisory	Youth and Fellowship  Missions	Superannuation Finance Trust Corporations Reports of Examiners of Records. Appointment of Moderator-elect Time and Place of Next Synod Closure of Synod
		12.30pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
4.30pm	<b>SESSION 1</b> Constitution of Synod  Retiring Moderator's Sermon. Thanks to Retiring Moderator  Presbytery Rolls. Welcomes to new members, guests, associations etc.	2.00pm	<b>SESSION 4</b>  Training of Ministry  Inter-Church Relations	<b>SESSION 7</b>  Missions Speakers	<b>Synod Closes at the end of Session 9 at 12.30pm</b>  <b>Lunch to follow before delegates depart</b>
6.00pm	Dinner	6.00pm	Dinner	Dinner	
7.00pm	<b>SESSION 2</b>  Election of Moderator for 2019/2020 Moderator's address.  Thanks to Moderator.	7.00pm	<b>SESSION 5</b>  Delegates from Other Churches	<b>SESSION 8</b>  Church and Nation Media (Banner & Website) Archivist	
7.30pm	Administration				
8.30pm	Close	8.30pm	Close	Close	

## **ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

Members: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Treasurer, Convener L&A

**Ministerial Movements:** Rev John Forbes was inducted to the Hastings charge on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

**Timetable:** Synod is due to commence at 4.30pm on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May and conclude by 12.30pm on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019. There is an extra day added for meetings this year. The Missions Meeting is set for Thursday afternoon for visiting speakers. Delegates from other churches are set to speak on Wednesday evening. Some adjustment may be needed to suit speaker's availability.

**Congregational Statistics:** See the table appended to this report.

**Expression of Sympathy:** We are not aware of the death of any former member of the Synod.

### **Correspondence:**

- 1) NP Remit re Child Protection
- 2) CP Remit re Child Protection
- 3) SP Remit re Child Protection
- 4) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Synod Timetable
- 5) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Administration Committee
- 6) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Psalmody
- 7) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Communion Cups
- 8) Overture from Northern Presbytery re All Nations Church
- 9) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Religious Festivals
- 10) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Inter Church Relations
- 11) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Stipend Relief Brisbane
- 12) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Sale of Lismore
- 13) Overture from Northern Presbytery re Brisbane Manse
- 14) Reference from Central Presbytery re Bequest of Peter McIntosh Martin.

**Committees:** The suggested Committee structure is as listed below:

**Administration:** Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Treasurer, Convener L&A

**Law and Advisory:** RS Ward (Convener), T Reeve, S Loudon, T Leggott, D Kerridge.

**Inter-Church Relations:** R Tso (Convener), GD Ball, T Leggott, RS Ward, J Forbes, J Klazinga.

**Church and Nation, Media:** GD Ball, (Convener Church and Nation), DK Muldoon, RS Ward (Banner), D Kerridge (Website), TW Yoa.

**Youth and Fellowship:** S Carswell (Convener), AA Miranda, T Reeve, J Forbes, Cameron Hamilton, Stephen Smith, Mandy Kerridge.

**Finance:** AH Steel (Convener), DJ Ramsay, T. Buck, DE Kerr.

**Superannuation:** R Tso (Convener), DJ Ramsay.

**Missions:** DK Muldoon (Convener), TI Leggott, JD Klazinga, J Greensill, Rhoda Ball.

**Training of Ministry:** D Kerridge (Convener), JA McCallum, AA Miranda, D Manly, R Tso.

**Proposed Deliverances:**

1. That Remits from Presbyteries (Items 1, 2 and 3) be taken with the Law and Advisory Committee Report.
2. That Correspondence 4 be taken with the Administration Committee Report.
3. That Correspondence 5 be taken with the Administration Committee Report.
4. That Correspondence 6 be taken with the Church and Nation Committee Report.
5. That Correspondence 7 be taken with the Law and Advisory Committee Report.
6. That Correspondence 8 be taken with the Law and Advisory Committee Report.
7. That Correspondence 9 be taken with the Law and Advisory Committee Report.
8. That Correspondence 10 be taken with the Inter Church relations Committee Report.
9. That Correspondence 11 be taken with the Northern Presbytery Report.
10. That Correspondence 12 be taken with the Northern Presbytery Report.
11. That Correspondence 13 be taken with the Northern Presbytery Report.
12. That Correspondence 14 be taken with the Law and Advisory Committee Report.
13. That Committee structure as noted in the report be adopted.
14. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery	Rev D Muldoon and All Nations elder.
Central Presbytery	Rev AA Miranda and Hastings elder.
Southern Presbytery	Rev J Forbes and Hunter elder.

**CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS AS AT 31.12.18**

	Elders / Deacons	Communicants				Typical Attendance of different persons each Lord's Day		Church Community By Age Total attendance if everyone present who worships at least once a month plus the homebound but not including visitors passing through.								Baptisms	Sunday- School classes/ groups	Youth midweek participants	
		2017	+	-	2018	Deaths	2017	2018	<4	4-11	12-18	19-30	31-45	45-64	65+				Total
Bethane	2/1	33	2	2	33	0	47	46	3	5	9	0	27	0	10	54	3	3/16	12
Nhla Rivers	4/4	40	0	1	39	1	35	34	0	6	0	2	1	8	24	41	0	1/4	0
Hatanga	4/1	28	2	0	30	0	45	52	1	4	3	33	*	*	11	52	0	1/1	0
Northern Pres	10/6	101	4	3	102	1	127	134	4	15	12	35	28	8	45	147	3	5/21	12
Manning	5/3	50	0	2	46	0	47	46	2	0	4	22	*	*	36	62	0	0	0
Hunter	2/2	43	7	3	47	1	70	70	4	6	8	34	*	*	18	70	2	2/32	0
St George	3/3	34	2	1	35	1	60	65	2	4	1	2	19	18	18	64	1	1/2	0
Mt Druitt	3/1	43	0	1	42	1	50	54	2	14	8	8	6	14	6	42	0	4/20	18
Central Pres	13/9	170	9	7	172	3	227	237	10	24	21	66	25	32	78	208	3	7/54	18
Knox	1/0	31	0	3	28		40	40	0	4	8	4	8	9	11	44	0	2/9	6
Nare Women	2/0	34	0	10	24		56	46	0	4	7	3	8	22	8	52	0	1/12	0
All Nations	2/0	63	0	0	63		115	115	8	31	37	16	17	36	2	147	0	2/57	12
Carum Downs	1/0	10	3	2	11		16	19	0	1	0	5	3	6	9	24	0	0	0
Coolong	2/0	12	0	0	12		9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12	0	0	0
Uversstone	1/1	19	3	0	22		30	30	1	2	2	13	2	8	6	34	1	2/4	15
Southern Pres	9/1	169	6	15	160		266	259	9	42	54	41	38	81	50	313	1	7/82	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	32/16	<b>440</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>191/57</b>	<b>63</b>

\* 19-64 age group not split up. In these cases the total 19-64 is in the 19-30 column

## NORTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

**Brisbane:** “Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 117). We give thanks for the ongoing faithfulness of the Lord and for the steadfast love demonstrated to us as a congregation in 2018.

*Services:* Services were normally held every Lord’s Day at our Emma Street building at 10 am and 5 pm. Most services were led by Pastor Jim Klazinga. When he was unable to do so, Dr. Wes Hanna normally led the morning services, with Elder Stewart Carswell taking the afternoon services. The pastor preached in Ulverstone for two Sundays in January, had a pulpit swap with a local CRCA pastor in March, and preached in Wauchope in April.

We continue to accommodate a number of our members needing to join with us for worship via their phones, including three people living in the Rockhampton area. Mrs. Jill Abbott began worshipping with us this year, also joining in via the phone.

The Lord’s Supper was celebrated six times, normally on the first Sunday of every other month. We continued the practice of having extra Thanksgiving collections for synodical causes on Lord’s Supper Sundays.

*Membership:* Mr. Ron Lawson was granted a disjunction certificate in January. Session expressed their thanks for his many years of service as an elder. Mr. Peter Schmidt and Mrs. Glenda had their names removed from the Membership Roll in April. Irene Klazinga met with the elders in June to profess her faith and was received into the Communicant Membership of the congregation.

In July, Taylor and Bonnie-Anne Richards were received into the membership of the congregation by disjunction certificate from the OPC of Portland, Maine, USA. Their fifth child, Amity, was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. She and two of her sisters, Valentina and Jerusha, were baptised on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

Micah and Lauren Klazinga were married on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

**Session:** The congregation has two elders and the pastor serving in session. Elder Wes Hanna serves in the role of Clerk of Session, while Elder Stewart Carswell serves as the representative elder at Presbytery and synod.

Presbytery appointed Mr. John Greensill of the Northern Rivers congregation as assessor elder, to assist at times when session is not able to come up with a quorum. So far, we haven’t needed to call on him.

*Deacons’ Court:* The Deacons’ Court consists of the two elders, the pastor, and one deacon, Mr. Keith Schmidt, who serves as clerk.

We continued to operate at a deficit, as our weekly offerings are not able to meet all our expenses. Mind you, we are thankful that our giving continues to increase at a faster rate than our expenses. We are also thankful for the ongoing stipend assistance provided by congregations in our presbytery and by synod.

This year we began collecting bi-monthly offerings for a Deaconate Fund. This fund is set apart to provide assistance in cases of special financial need in the congregation.

*Education and Fellowship:* A number of members, led by Miss Julie Schmidt, gather together for a few minutes before the morning worship services during the school year, to learn psalm tunes and harmonies. Sunday School classes continued to be held each week during the school year after the morning worship services. We give thanks for those leading and participating. Fellowship lunches were held at the church each Sunday after the Sunday School time.

The pastor continued his practice of sending text messages six days a week to members via their mobile phones, informing the congregation of matters for prayer, focussing mainly on the members and activities of the congregation. He also began sending texts focussed on denominational prayer matters to leaders and members throughout the PCEA.

The minister led a Pastor’s Class during the Sunday School time, two fortnightly mid-week Bible Studies meeting on alternate weeks, and a men’s Spiritual Growth Discussion Group, held occasionally following the Sunday evening worship service. Women met in a separate group, led by Mrs. Julie Klazinga.

The youth group met regularly for study and fellowship, led by Julie Schmidt and Matthew Schmidt.

*Camp Drewe:* The Annual Family Camp was held at Lennox Head in December. We were blessed by the ministry of Rev. Graeme Hart, pastor of the McKinnon Reformed Presbyterian Church, who led a series of talks focused on the life of Joseph.

**Northern Rivers:** We again give thanks to the Lord that His Kingdom endures and grows in the world.

Another PCEA Youth Camp was held at John and Judy Greensill's property on Palmer's Channel over the Easter long weekend. There were approximately 26 in attendance from various congregations from Brisbane to Ulverstone. It was a great blessing to the congregation to be able to worship with the young people from these places and rejoice in the continuing witness of the denomination to the Lord Jesus Christ. We do pray that this endeavour might continue and be hosted in other Congregations in the future. Northern Rivers is scheduled to host the 2019 Camp. Beyond this we understand that Youth and Fellowship Committee may consider other alternatives.

The congregation meets each Lord's Day in Grafton at 9 am, and Maclean at 11 am and 4 pm, with a combined attendance of approximately 30 for the two morning services (approximately 8-10 in the afternoon). Mid-week Bible Studies are held, 10 am Wednesday in Maclean. The Live Telephone Service is used by members in Ballina and Evans Head who are unable to attend.

The Manse in Maclean available without charge to the Lower Clarence Christian Education Board for the operation of an Op-Shop. According to a recent review, they have raised \$1.2 million dollars in the last 10 years for the work of Special Religious Education in the High Schools in Grafton and Maclean, as well as providing for a full time SRE teacher in Maclean. They make a donation to the congregation of \$5,000 per year. We again remind PCEA congregations that this money is available for assistance to other congregations or worthy causes. The Church Hall at Maclean continues to serve a number of groups in the community as well as the needs of the congregation. The Church and Hall in Lismore is leased to the child-minding centre – Care-Ring, and this is the subject of a possible sale (now probable, at time of submitting this report), as mentioned in an Overture from Northern Presbytery.

The Bethesda Retirement Units are operated by a management committee under the supervision of the Deacons' Court. All units have been occupied throughout the year and there is a long waiting list. Following the sale of the Manse at 36 Bruce Drive, Gulmarrad to our Minister and his family, more than sufficient funds are available for the work locally. We are grateful for the Lord's provision here, especially as maintenance is becoming an issue with units needing repair and updating.

The Minister continues as a Board Member of the local Pacific Valley Christian School and has very positive relationships with students and staff. As in the previous years, he has been invited to lead staff morning devotions before school on repeat occasions and is on a roster to lead devotions for the whole School Assemblies. The School is growing rapidly and is a great witness to the majority of non-Christian students. Being involved here is a great opportunity for outreach. A Breakfast Club has been started as a joint initiative of our church as one opportunity to interact with the kids and has been a blessing commended by students and staff alike.

We look to the Lord's continued blessing on the work here into 2019.

**Hastings:** Preparations were underway throughout 2018 for the reception of a new minister. Rev John Forbes from the Free Church of Scotland accepted a call to the congregation in January 2018 but there was a number of months of waiting for the visa process to be completed. In the meantime a significant building project was carried out on the manse, adding an upper floor with three extra bedrooms to accommodate the new minister and his family.

The induction took place on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and the service, led by Rev Jim Klazinga was a great encouragement to those present, including friends from the PCEA, Christians friends from other churches, and friends in the UK who were able to watch the service live-streamed over the internet (thanks to the equipment and technical expertise provided by Rev Robin Tso). Mr Klazinga preached from Romans 11:36, reminding the congregation of the pre-eminence of Christ "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

The congregation is thankful to the Lord for the leadership and oversight of Rev Trevor Leggott as interim-moderator during the vacancy and for the stable arrangement of pulpit supply that they benefitted from over these years.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 the congregation rejoiced in the Lord as they marked the centenary of the opening of their place of worship at 41 Campbell Street. Friends from the local area and beyond joined the congregation to mark this occasion and to offer thankfulness to God for the witness to the gospel that has been possible over these years and for his gracious provision to the congregation in material things.

## CENTRAL PRESBYTERY REPORT

**Manning:** We record our thankfulness to God for another year of ministry and witness in the Manning. The Lord has provided for all our needs. All the regular services and mid-week fellowship meetings have been maintained with good support. We are thankful for the spirit of unity we that we enjoy. The Ladies in the Missionary Society are to be commended for the work they do in supporting various missionary needs and keeping us informed. We have one member, Young Lee, who teaches Scripture in two local primary schools, and as a congregation we support a full time Scripture teacher in our local high schools. 'Brothers pray for us' (1 Thess. 5: 25).

**Hunter Barrington:** Lord's Day Worship Services were conducted weekly at Raymond Terrace (am) and Cardiff (am & pm). Rev Tso continued preaching through the Gospel of Matthew in the mornings and 1 Kings in the evenings on the Lord's Day. Weekly live telephone and internet broadcasts of Worship services to our sick, aged and other interested persons have been made available. Lord's Day sermons have been uploaded to the website weekly. A live stream of the services has facilitated an increase in the number of online listeners of 1200 in 2017 to a combined audio & video count of 2000 in 2018.

Prayer Meetings/Bible studies were held regularly in both centres. Rev Tso faithfully conducted study of the book of Exodus. Prayer for spiritual maturity, local and wider mission and our sister PCEA congregations have been priorities. Ladies Bible studies were conducted fortnightly at both centres by Mrs Tso. The beneficial series of studies was based on the book of Romans. The participation of the brethren in studying the word and associated fellowship has been an encouragement.

An All Age Sunday School was conducted at Cardiff each week during school Terms. Psalm tunes, the Shorter Catechism and the Scriptures have been taught faithfully to the participants. Young people/adult participants completed a helpful study of Mark's gospel. The infants group was conducted in the afternoon prior to Worship.

Young people/young adult's fellowship was conducted on occasions by the Minister and his wife. Some youth were regularly involved in the All Age Sunday School study of Mark's class conducted by Mr Miller. We are encouraged that some of our youth are seeking the Lord.

Membership increased with the admission to communicant membership of 7 adults. We were saddened by the passing of long -standing member, Mrs Grace Hindmarsh and of Miss Jennifer Dunne, adherent and daughter of Mr and Mrs Bruce Dunne. Rev Tso baptised two infants, Scarlet & Sienna Oringo, daughters of Dr Alfred & Mrs Amy Oringo.

Local mission activities included the distribution of tracts and the Samaritan's Purse Operation. Friendly contacts were established and a total of 120 boxes were collected at Raymond Terrace which operated as an area collection centre. Mission presentations including the Seaman's Christian Friendship Society, a mission to Kenya, and India Reformed Fellowship Australia provided insight into the challenges and blessings.

We thank the Lord for our Minister's faithful and relevant exposition of the Scriptures. His helpful pastoral care and contribution to the maintenance of peaceful, Christian relationships have been appreciated. The significant contribution of Mr Alex Steel (Assessor Elder) to the work of Session and Deacons' Court is gratefully acknowledged.

We give thanks to our Almighty, Sovereign God who has abundantly blessed us throughout 2018. By His grace, we seek to *give unto the LORD the glory due to His name;* (and to) *Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness* (Psalm 29:2).

**St Georges:** We thankfully acknowledge that our gracious heavenly Father has enabled us to continue to represent His cause in the CBD of Sydney. We continue to meet on the Lord's Day for Bible Class and Sabbath School at 9.30am, morning worship at 10.30am, Psalmody class at 5.15pm, evening worship at 6.00pm. At all services we had our regular worshippers, many of whom travel long distances. We also had international visitors from many parts of the world to worship with us, as well as from interstate and intrastate churches such as visitors from Tasmania, Western Australia, Canada, the USA (both New York and Florida), some Asian countries, as well as Germany and Holland. There was a good cross section of old and young including young families in our midst.

The services have been maintained notwithstanding major construction work being carried out next door incorporating 'Porter House' with 116 Bathurst Street in a high end apartment building with a Luxury 5 star Hotel. This project is the work of a consortium known as United Development Sydney which is a joint venture of the Chinese Shangi Development and Australian Crown Group. The building to be known as Castle Residences is a 37 story facing Bathurst Street and suspended over Porter House, our next door neighbor. It is reported to cost \$380million and have 131 apartments and 121 room boutique gallery hotel by Sofitel.

Mean, our Website has played a major part in attracting visitors. With on-line sermons of J. McCallum, as well as the promotion of our standards, form of worship and our location in the city. Many, if they returned to Sydney, came back to worship with us. Because of St George's ideal location in Sydney CBD, these visitors were able to attend our services. The visitors from overseas comprised mainly of business people, students, tourists and those attending various conferences in the city. There has been good feedback of interest being shown in our Website, and our minister's sermons are being downloaded. CDs of the services continued to be distributed weekly with good response from congregational members, adherents, visitors and orders from some who don't worship with us, but do enjoy the sermons, readings and prayers. We were visited by two Koreans who regularly enjoy downloading our services.

We celebrated the Lord's Supper twice in 2018. Communicant members for the year ending 31st December 2018 were 35. Attendances at worship services were between 42-59 at the Lord's Day morning services, with 28-32 at the evening services, and 18-25 at the midweek Services.

Repairs and restoration work preparations for the steeple have been progressing slowly. Ways of funding this project is a major issue. The congregation continues in good spirits generally and we are thankful to God for His graciousness to us in providing the means whereby we can gather together for public worship.

**Sydney West (Mt Druitt):** In Mt Druitt two worship services are held each Lord's day, at 11am and 6pm-5pm in winter. The minister is preaching from 1Peter and Jeremiah. Three Sunday school classes totaling 17 children, two Bible classes and a Tongan fellowship are held before morning worship. Singing from the metrical 'Sing Psalms' is led by any of three precentors. On Friday evenings 9-10 primary age children attended the Lighthouse Club, and 6-8 youth attended the Youth Club. We have a Bible study and prayer time on Fridays. A Holiday Kids Club was held in the April 2018 school holidays with good attendance and involvement of church members.

On New Year's Eve we held a special service at 9.00pm, followed by a time of praise and prayer in Tongan. We often have visitors, particularly from Tonga, at the morning service. Church members regularly attend three nursing homes, Abel Tasman in Chester Hill, Currawong Nursing home, and Governor Phillip in Penrith, to conduct worship services and/or minister to the aged and terminally ill. The needs are great and we pray the Lord to send harvesters into his harvest field. We pray he will use us for his glory in western Sydney.

Tenants in the manse moved out in January. Renovations including new kitchen, carpet, blinds and paint have been carried out. We hope to settle new tenants into the manse soon.

## SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

*We are in urgent need of at least two more ministers and crave the prayers of the wider church.*

**Geelong (1853):** Services have continued much as before with one extra fairly regular attender. Bert Stasse and David Manly have each generally supplied once a month with students or others, including two visits in 2018 by Rowland Ward as our Interim-Moderator since his appointment last May. There is good fellowship in the congregation. Morning tea after church is enjoyed with profitable discussion on spiritual issues a feature. There have been several Session meetings and attention is being given to property maintenance. It has been ascertained that subdivision of the property is possible (minimum size is 2000m<sup>2</sup>, the site is over 4,000m<sup>2</sup>) although the location of existing buildings is not ideal. There are several scenarios. If the church car park was brought to the front of the church the garden maintenance burden would be reduced; the manse could be cut off and sold with the potential for a purchaser to add a second dwelling although not subdivide; or the manse retained and a second dwelling built and leased. Much depends on actual values but the potential is being looked at.

*Continuation of the lease of the premises was approved in line with usual procedure. Some maintenance was being attended to.*

**Knox (1855/1987):** We had the privilege of serving our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the local congregation of his church in Knox for another year in 2018. We thank our Lord for the continued freedom and opportunity to do so and pray that this may continue in 2019. We thank God for helping us maintain our faithfulness to him but also for giving us to more opportunities to help others grow in the Lord.

Rev. Miranda was appointed as interim moderator for the Narre Warren congregation in addition to the Ulverstone congregation and in that capacity, he visited both congregations when required. Rev Dr Ward was appointed interim moderator of Geelong and has also been heavily involved in providing supply preaching at the new Carrum Downs congregation since Rev David Kumnick's health has limited his opportunities to preach. Rev. Miranda and family moved into their own house in Bayswater North in March 2018 and so the manse, as approved by Presbytery, is now being let out to a family. The congregation celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of our adherents at a High Tea with her family and friends hosted at our Knox church premises.

We ran a Christianity Explored/Soul course for two visitors in the first half of the 2018 and one continues to attend with her son who is a member. We ran an advertisement for a Christianity Explored course in Sep/Oct 2018 in the Knox Leader paper but sadly had no enquiries. We hosted psalm singing & fellowship time in June to which we invited the other PCEA congregations in Melbourne. Missionary support was again given to Synod. We continued our sponsorship of girls through Mukti. In combination with a Youth Group activity on missions, we also sent cards from the congregation to the girls. For Samaritans Purse, 36 boxes were packed and forwarded for distribution to underprivileged children located overseas. We also contributed 2 boxes of non-perishable food to the local Knox Community Christmas support program.

Sunday School and Youth Group functioned during the year and we were blessed to have some combined activities with All Nations congregation in the second half of the year. Our regular mid-week general and Ladies Bible studies continued during the year. The knitting group also continued between April and October and continues to be an outreach to the local community. We thank the volunteers who made these groups possible. The communion roll is 28 since some people are no longer attending. However, we have had some new visitors who have been attending regularly meaning the typical attendance of different persons each Lord's Day remains about 40 across the morning and evening services. Elders' visits have been carried out during the year. Congregational luncheons continued every two months. The weekly publication of the Knox News sets out our regular activities but also is used to inform members of the challenges we face in this day and age.

We also had the pleasure, in combination with the Narre Warren congregation, of hosting the ministry student, Mr Duncan Hickey, for a placement from 1 Jan to 3 Feb 2019 to advance his preaching and pastoral skills under the supervision of Interim-moderator and elders of Knox and Narre Warren congregations.

**Ulverstone (1965):** The Ulverstone Congregation continues its ministry on the NW coast of Tasmania. Although vacant since May 2017 we continue to be well supplied by a number of visiting and local men.

Our interim moderator, Rev Andres Miranda visits from time to time to conduct the sacraments and attend special meetings. There have been two baptisms over the last year and we were blessed with three new communicant members. We rejoice in a growing number of young adults, recent marriages and new births. This provides a rich fellowship across all ages. We remain conscious of the need for a full time pastor and continue to pray that the Lord will answer this in His timing. We continue to enjoy positive fellowship with other churches in the state and recently some were able to attend the annual SPC camp. Some were also able to attend the recent PCEA family camp and a number of the young adults look forward to attending the Easter camp at Maclean. The various meetings of the congregation include the Lord's Day morning worship service, Sunday school, adult study class, midweek meeting, ladies WMU and craft, mens' prayer breakfast and monthly fellowship meeting. We also enjoy a monthly church luncheon and will sometimes have additional ones for special events. A number of people in the congregation support various child sponsorship programs. The church life is regularly reported on the congregational web site at [www.ulvpcea.org](http://www.ulvpcea.org) and also in the Presbyterian Banner.

**Narre Warren (1989):** Since the loss of our minister, Rev Sjirk Bajema, in February of 2018 we have been blessed to be able to continue on with regular services and meetings/study groups. We give thanks to God for sustaining us throughout the past year, for the provision of faithful ministers, lay preachers and elders who continued to faithfully proclaim God's Word from our pulpit. Our preaching roster/supply has basically consisted of support from the Rev. Stephen Giles (2 x AM services per month), Rev. Graeme Hart (1xPM service per month), regular elder supply from Stewart Loudon and myself, Mr. John Disney and an extra service or two taken by Rev. Rowland Ward, elders Chris White and David Manly. Our thanks to each one of these servants.

We are also very thankful for the support and pastoral care given to our congregation by our interim moderator, Rev. Andres Miranda. We thank him for his preaching support and leadership in the provision of the Lord's Supper for our congregation. We have unfortunately suffered the loss of ten of our communicant members during this past year – 1 x death, 1 x marriage, 3 x Bajema family, 5 x members. Our communicants' roll has been adjusted to reflect this position. We now have a total of 24 x communicant members, almost half of these, 11, are folk in their late 70's to mid-eighties age bracket. Overall the congregation are of good heart with a love for one another and a common spirit of unity. We have all been thankful for the Lord's grace and mercy extended to our fellowship throughout this past year in so many practical ways. We prayerfully look to the Lord's provision of a new minister to serve and shepherd our small flock. The possibility of manse on the rear of church site had been considered and would be looked at again. It was recommended that a Town Planning expert be engaged.

**All Nations (2007):** The work at All Nations was fairly steady during the year in both numerical and financial terms. There was a Wednesday Bible Study, a Youth meeting on Fridays and a Women's meeting on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm. Good co-operation with Knox has occurred so far as the Youth work is concerned. There is also a youth gathering on Sunday evenings. There is a real opportunity for young people to contribute to a mission on our door step. During the year we ran several workshops on domestic violence and related issues which received positive comment from the State government. Although we have absolutely no reserve funds we do have the building, and the State government has recognised our unique role in the African community.

In December we were given a grant from government to develop harmony across and beyond the South Sudanese community. This will benefit our own congregation as well although the funds are not available for our ordinary expenses. In 2019 we will be running day activities for young people as well as workshops addressing issues in the community. We hope to develop a webpage to showcase the African community in co-operation African Advancement Victoria Inc. which a number of us have established. We also have been given an infrastructure grant to fund the cost of permits to extend the hall and build offices above. A grant for the actual building has been indicated in the 2019-20 allocation by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Our regular offerings have dropped over the last two months; we're not sure but probably due to relocation of refugees in Africa late in 2018 necessitating greater support from relatives in Australia. At the congregational meeting shortly we will also be recommending the appointment of an additional elder who has demonstrated commitment to the work, particularly among the youth.

*After discussion concerning the challenges so far as written English at All Nations is concerned, the Presbytery resolved, none opposing, to write to the Training of Ministry Committee with the following proposal: That subject to Synod approval the Training of Ministry Committee make available funding for*

*suitable courses at PTC for men with limited English who are recommended by their Session and approved by Presbytery and who are actively involved in leadership as elders,.*

**Carrum Downs (2010):** The Carrum Downs work became part of the PCEA in 2010 and has been largely supplied by the Rev David Kumnick until more recent times when David's health rendered this impossible. So Rowland Ward, the Interim-Moderator, has taken the services since April 2018. The church building, generously funded by Knox, was duly opened on 21 April 2018; the contents were paid for by the congregation. We have about 7 new regulars from the local communities attending. We found advertising in the newspaper not providing results, but postcards in letterboxes were effective and, of course, a presence on google maps. From April to December the Book of Acts was expounded and currently the Letter of James. David Kumnick's health has improved of late so that it is likely that he will be able to preach again from time to time. For the present we have a morning service at 10.30 followed by morning tea, but stand ready to respond to opportunities as they arise. We could use suitable helpers. We are a congregation under an Interim Session but not a sanctioned charge and so have no representation in Presbytery but when able to attend, Mr Kumnick is, of course, associated.

## LAW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr Rowland S. Ward (Convener 2007), Tom Reeve, Stewart Loudon, Trevor Leggott, David Kerridge

The Committee as usual has met by email with first correspondence initiated on 14 May 2018 following Synod in line with Handbook 5.19 (5).

### 1. Handbook clarifications

a. In the light of the removal of the statute of limitations for certain sexual abuse matters, Handbook 7.2 be amended to read as follows (the underlined words being the changes) and so ensure no apparent impediment to the application of criminal law:

*7.2 No discipline, other than private discussion, can be exercised for an offence committed, or alleged to have been committed, more than five years before the charge is made, unless it be of a most serious kind (e.g., bigamy, child abuse), or becomes again flagrant, or involves a civil matter related to child abuse or the like that is not subject to the statute of limitations in the relevant civil or criminal law.*

b. To minimise any confusion amend part of section 5.37 to add the underlined words for the sake of clarification.

Class 2 legislation is all other legislation and usually arises from an overture or committee report suggesting legislation entirely or substantially related to the Synod itself, such as the regulation of the business of Synod and its committees, and decisions in local matters or those of an exhortatory or advisory character. In these matters the Synod comes to its own mind without use of Barrier Act procedure, although it may refer proposed Class 2 legislation to presbyteries if it wishes (but consent is not required for enactment to take place). Class 2 legislation has binding force but if a Class 2 enactment should have been Class 1 it has no binding force in respect of the Class 1 elements within it.

### 2. NSW Property Act

We are waiting on the results of the approach to the member for Ryde initiated by Mr Alex Steel, but acknowledgement of our proposed amendment to the Property Act has been received and further information furnished via a Committee-approved letter dated 14 September 2018.

### 3. Taxation issues

a. On 24 July 2018, the ATO issued a new ruling TR2018/D2 to replace previous ruling TR92/17 in regard to non-cash benefits. It should have no negative impact on ministers in the normal parish situation as distinct from administrative roles. Our limit for the non-cash element of Stipend is 40% as set by Synod 2017.

b. Parliament passed legislation, effective 1 July 2018, that required employers with 20 or more employees to report taxable salaries, PAYG deductions and superannuation each payday using a Single Touch Payment (or STP) system linked with their payroll software. On 12 February 2019, Parliament passed legislation so that the STP system is to apply from 1 July 2019 to smaller enterprises including churches. Given that many small enterprises do not use automated payroll software, the ATO has arranged for alternative ways to provide the information at a cost of \$10 a month or less. The ATO realise the adjustment will not be easy for many, and delayed implementation is available on request. Given the church financial year is the calendar year it is thought congregations should seek deferral until 1 January 2020 and meantime available procedures for compliance will become more clear, particularly the impact on church reporting of payment of superannuation centrally as at present.

### 4. Covenant marriage

Synod 2018 received an overture which sought acknowledgement of the definition of marriage as a creation ordinance, reaffirmation of commitment to WCF 24:2,3, and restriction on ministers so that they could not marry other than professing Christians. The first two points are part of our doctrinal commitment; the third is a deduction from the others which is open to debate, but in any case the question of a minister using his discretion to marry two people who may not be Christians, or where only one is, is distinct from the duty Christians have to marry only in the Lord. We do not consider further legislation is required but that ministers can be trusted to deal appropriately and pastorally when confronted with such situations.

## **5. Legal note re legal action for alleged child abuse**

An unincorporated body like a church holds its assets in trust. The defence to legal claims used by Dr George Pell when Archbishop of Sydney to prevent the Roman Catholic Church being sued relied on this distinction since holding property for the church did not make the Property Trust liable for all legal claims associated with church activities. This “Ellis Defence” as it is known has now been removed by legislation - in Victoria from 5 June 2018 and in NSW from 1 January 2019 Qld.; pending etc. Of course, we would not have used such a defence but now we can’t anyway. The law now is that an unincorporated body must nominate an entity that is capable of being sued to act as a proper defendant to the claim on their behalf and to incur any liability arising from a claim on their behalf. (In our case one of the trust bodies.) In short, while an abuser, if alive, can be personally sued, failure on the part of the responsible parties in a congregation and its supervising Presbytery may also result in them being sued, and the assets available to their congregation held for it in trust by the Trustees must be applied to satisfy any judgment and costs to the limit of those assets. The new laws do not impact any insurance cover the church may have but of course insurers will not provide cover unless there is adequate compliance with the duty of care on organisations.

## **6. Legal note re reversal of onus of proof in child abuse cases**

Effective 1 July 2017 Victoria reversed the onus of proof. (This has been the case for many years in OH & S cases.) If child abuse occurs, there is a presumption that the organisation failed in its duty of care unless it can prove that reasonable precautions were taken to prevent such abuse. The organisation also will have responsibility for the actions of its personnel. As Committee reports for several years have indicated, other States were sure to follow suit. This has now occurred in NSW under the *Civil Liability Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse Liability) Act 2018* with effect October 2018. The same legislation establishes vicarious liability on the organisation not only for the actions of employees but for the actions of volunteers and persons akin to an employee such as ministers. The aim of such legislation is to ensure organisations do everything possible to ensure child abuse does not occur in the first place. The reversal of the onus of proof is also in Queensland’s *Civil Liability Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse Liability) Bill 2018* currently in process.

The long and short is that we must have strict procedures in place to prevent abuse in the first place or to be able to offer a proper defence should it occur despite reasonable and proper preventative measures. That means a detailed and clear Code of Conduct and good record keeping among other things. We suspect this will become second nature after a while despite the initial trouble getting used to it.

## **7. Legal Note re the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**

These were adopted on 9 February 2019 by COAG (Council of Australian Governments) . Some states already have legislation covering these; those that don’t will follow shortly. They are described more fully on pages 12-14 of Synod 2018 Reports.

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## **8. Church Safe Policy & Code of Conduct**

### **8.1 Church Safe Policy & Code of Conduct – Brief Overview**

The Committee has continued to monitor this area as there is some new information and now present a comprehensive recommendation that covers all matters required. If accepted it will bring preoccupation with the subject at Synod level to some finality.

Background to discussion on this matter can be briefly summarised as follows:

- Oct 2012-Nov 2013* Victorian Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations
- Jan 2013- Dec 2017* Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- May 2017 Synod* Law and Advisory Committee recommended that the PCEA adopt the PCV Safe Church Policy and Code of Practice, already adopted by Southern Presbytery without dissent, and that Synod approve Southern Presbytery using the resources of the PCV Safe Church Unit for record keeping, with PCEA churches outside Victoria utilising approved training facilities available locally. Consideration was deferred pending responses by Presbyteries.
- Nov 2017* Only Central Presbytery had responded with a proposal advocated by Mr Reeve and developed by the members of Central Presbytery largely based on a Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia (PRCA) document which however is not universally used by the PRC (see below 8.3c).
- May 2018* The four-member Committee, hampered by the departure of one member who resigned from the PCEA and another (Mr Louden) who was new to the Committee and preferred not to comment, ended up submitting a majority report and a minority report, although more accurately they were Dr Ward's report and Mr Reeve's Report which advocated the Central Presbytery proposal. The majority Report was similar to the 2017 one, pointed out that *Breaking the Silence* of the PCNSW was the same as PCV Safe Church; removed the proposal that the PCV keep records for the PCEA in Victoria; and incorporated into the Safe Church Policy various provisions chiefly relating to record keeping. The Central Presbytery proposal was preferred by an 10-6 vote passed as an Interim Act in force until this Synod, and remitted under the Barrier Act to Presbyteries. The Committee was appointed with five members.
- May 2019* The Committee has not obtained unanimous agreement but Mr Leggott, Mr Louden and the Convener agree that the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct of the PCNSW, used also in Tasmania, SA, WA, and virtually identical to Safe Church used in the PCV, be adopted by us with clarification at two points to make crystal clear that marriage in our eyes is between a man and a woman only, an adjustment considered desirable if not necessary given the change in the law effective 9 December 2017 allowing same sex marriage. The kind of additions about record keeping &c. inserted in the proposal in 2018 will go in the Handbook. This will mean that the Policy and Code of Conduct will rarely need amendment. Legislative changes can be noted in the Handbook from time to time. Mr Reeve retains his support for the proposal remitted to Presbyteries by Synod 2018 and Mr Kerridge advised likewise on 6 February. On 9 February Northern Presbytery unanimously approved the remit but recommended various changes; Central Presbytery also approved while Southern Presbytery disapproved 5-1.

## **8.2 Commentary**

- a. The reversal of the onus of proof means in effect you are guilty and responsible for child sexual abuse that occurs until proved innocent see Item 5 above. This means that it is not enough to comply with specific rules such as Working with Children checks, mandatory reporting &c., but one must be able to show that the church has done all things reasonable to prevent abuse. The definition of what is reasonable will vary and is likely to be expanded in the light of contemporary secular attitudes.
- b. One of the major differences between the Code of Conduct in the two proposals is that the Committee's proposal gives very detailed directions as to what is required. This has to be the case (a) because the very nature of sexual abuse is that those guilty of it will twist the Scripture to assert what they did was OK; (b) and matters more than child sexual abuse are covered to ensure safety, eg H; (the H word not used to avoid targeting by activists).
- c. Discussion with Fiona Bligh of the Safe Church unit of the PCV is enlightening. She reminds us that it is common for sexual offenders to act opportunistically and at the risk of being caught: it's part of the perverted thrill they get. Typical would be abusing a child sitting on a person's lap in a room with others present.
- d. The older generation often still finds it hard to grasp all the issues. That's not uncommon; older lawyers have the same problem. Some 15 years ago only 44% of those guilty of sexual penetration of a child 10 to 16 in Victoria received a custodial sentence. That means a lot of risky people remained in the community, leave aside those whose crimes were never reported. The comment by Robert Richter, QC that Cardinal Pell's offence was a 'plain vanilla' one rightly brought widespread protests and an apology from Richter who is 73. This is not the attitude that passes muster now because we are much more aware of the terrible impact of child sexual abuse. *As a church we need to place the care of children, and vulnerable adults at the highest point of*

*pastoral concern*, and have a sensitive conscience on this subject so that we not only have good legislation but put it into practice with initial training and regular updates for all having responsibility for children.

### **8.3 Central Presbytery proposal (pages 25-30, 2018 Reports)**

a. There is no question that the Central Presbytery proposal is well-intentioned, seeks to be pastorally sensitive and covers some of the basics. However, it is not adequate in the current environment. It forgets the great requirement is not to give a homily on Biblical teaching but set clear, transparent rules for behaviour that the most theological ignorant attendee at our activities, worship services or otherwise, can understand. It is NOT a stand alone document but requires reference to the Bible, the Handbook and the Larger Catechism. It is not well drafted. It includes material more suited for the Handbook but not enough of such material to enable Sessions and Presbyteries to fulfil their responsibilities properly. It is also 3,616 words long compared to the Committee proposal of 2,377 or about 3,400 including Handbook changes that do cover adequately the Session and Presbytery responsibilities. A Policy/Code of Conduct should not require constant amendment as it should stand alone as an expression of our Biblical commitment above and apart from what the State may require, but the way the Central Presbytery proposal is written requires it to be frequently adjusted.

b. the material sent as a remit under the Barrier Act is unique to us and has not been examined from a legal point of view. It is regarded as less than satisfactory even by many in the PCAu on one of whose documents it was modelled. In the PRC there are those who hitherto have resisted the requirements of what they think of as a 'nanny State' and others who wish a church-wide policy which others resist. The current situation is that each PRC congregation has its own policy as it sees fit, but increasingly the requirements of their Insurers are such that insurance may become impossible to obtain unless a more comprehensive and uniform Policy and Code of Conduct is adopted. The Breaking the Silence/Safe Church material was prepared by the main Presbyterian body which is well resourced with legal expertise, and has been adopted by our sister-church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia. The PCEA in Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales use the Breaking the Silence/Safe Church training and it is logical and less confusing to use their policy and Code of Conduct with the minimal adjustments necessary to relate to the PCEA. Why try and reinvent the wheel when we don't have wheelwrights?

c. we need to have a policy which will not give problems to the newer office-bearers when we oldies are gone, or give rise to criticism that our policy is inadequate, or create issues in securing ministers whether from overseas or otherwise (since we need to provide evidence of our policy to Immigration authorities), or create issues if any of our ministers preach in a PCAu church or vice versa, or occupy Synods for the next few years. We also need something that will not be faulted by our Insurers, and where we can piggyback on our larger brother if changes are required.

d. It is noted that there was no great negativity expressed at Synod 2018 about the earlier Committee proposal and it is hoped that brothers will see the wisdom of what the Committee submits.

## **9. Handbook changes re child abuse**

So far as adjustment to the Handbook to put specific requirements together in one place the following changes are indicated:

### **CHAPTER 2 SESSION**

2.4 Prior to an election it is recommended that the Moderator should preach on the scriptural qualifications and warrant for the office. The session must not install any person as an elder or deacon whom it does not regard as meeting the qualifications of Scripture, nor may it install any person who has not received the approval of a majority of communicant members, **nor may it install any person who has not signed their agreement to the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct of the PCEA**, nor may the session dispense with an edict. Subject to these requirements, the session may exercise discretion in the manner of election, but it is recommended that the following procedure be followed.

Renumber 2.9 to 2.9a and add new section 2.9b,c,d,e.f & g.

## 2.9b PERSONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

**2.9b Applicants for working with children:** All applicants for working with children or young people, including applicants for office as elder or deacon, creche assistants and youth workers, must

- i) be members of the congregation for at least twelve months, unless transferred from another PCEA congregation with a full letter of good standing;
- ii) have a working with children clearance and meet other legal requirements, including reference checks.
- iii) commit in writing to the PCEA Safe Church policy and Safe Church PCEA Code of Conduct by signing a copy to be lodged with the Session;
- iv) be approved by the Session by a **written minute which certifies these requirements have been met;**
- v) participate regularly in public worship;
- vi) undertake **initial and follow-up training** in safe church matters as prescribed by Presbytery or Synod at no less a frequency than prescribed in State and federal legislation;
- vii) have the regular oversight of the Session.

**2.9c Known Offenders:** No person with a known history of sexual molestation or the like offending may be employed in a supervisory role or be alone with children. [In any case Church insurance does not cover abuse by known offenders.]

**2.9d Report to Presbytery:** Any case of actual or alleged child abuse must be reported to Presbytery (Handbook 7.26) for the security of other congregations and for any necessary assistance.

**2.9e Resignation from position of authority:** Should an office-bearer or other person working with children resign his or her post or leave the congregation the Session must certify **in the Session minutes** that, after enquiry, they are satisfied that there are no rumours or allegations that suggest failure to observe the PCEA Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct. If Session is not satisfied, appropriate steps must be taken and no clear disjunction certificate issued.

**2.9f Registers to be kept:** A register of all office-bearers and persons working with children shall be kept with relevant dates, and a copy lodged with the Presbytery (see 2.30). A register of children attending at meetings of Sunday school, youth groups, camps etc. should be kept, and placed in the church archives.

**2.9g Notice about Policy and Code of Conduct:** A notice in the church foyer or hall indicating where or from whom a copy of the PCEA Safe Church policy and Code of Practice may be viewed or obtained must be displayed. It is also to be available on the PCEA website. Non-PCEA groups using church facilities must be provided a copy of this Policy and Code of Conduct as an illustration what is expected of those using our facilities.

~~2.12 The session admits persons to the membership of the congregation. members in full communion of a congregation are baptised persons professing saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who satisfy the session as to their knowledge of the Word of God, whose life and outward conduct appears consistent with a Christian profession, and who are admitted to communicant membership by the session, and thus to participation in the Lord's Supper and into full communion with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. It is usual for the minister to take the principal charge of examining applicants with respect to their profession and their knowledge. Ministers are members of the congregation they serve or to which they are attached, but jurisdiction over them belongs to their Presbytery (Act of Synod 2007.14)~~

To ensure that there are no outstanding issues or adverse history Sessions must be careful concerning the background history of those who apply for membership. Pastoral care and home visitation are important in this respect. A simple form to collect basic data is strongly recommended and must be kept securely in the Session records.

2.13 Once approved by the Session the **admission of members** is announced to the congregation. Particularly for a first profession, admission may occur at a public worship service where the person is asked several questions along the following lines:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the true and complete word of God, and do you believe the interpretation of the Scriptures taught in this church to set forth the true message of salvation?

2. Do you believe in the only true God, distinct in three persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - who of nothing made the heaven and the earth and all that is in them, and still upholds and governs them, so that nothing comes to pass, whether in heaven or on earth, without his holy will?

3. Do you admit that by nature you are a sinner, unclean before God, and that in your thoughts, words and deeds you have often broken God's commandments; and do you now declare that you are heartily sorry for all your sins?

4. Do you confess your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and do you promise in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to serve God with all that is in you, and to participate gladly in the life and work of his church?

5. Do you agree to submit, in the Lord, to the rule of the elders in this church, and to heed their counsel as they seek to shepherd you in the ways of the Lord?

2.14 The session may add communicant members by letter of transfer from another congregation of the church, or by disjunction certificate from another church not deemed to be in fundamental error in the judgement of the session. **In the case of persons from other congregations or denominations applying for membership without a full and clear disjunction certificate, the session must check with the previous church, and would be well advised to do so in any case. Any concern must be documented, advice sought as appropriate and the result minuted.** ~~It may be helpful if persons becoming members on profession of faith be received during a service of worship on the Lord's Day.~~ [Reception of persons excommunicated from another church requires that reasons for such discipline be obtained from the church concerned, that the discipline be respected if scriptural, the consent of the presbytery be obtained if it proposed to receive the applicant, and that the other church be informed of the action taken and the reasons - see Act 3, Synod 1978.]

2.15 **While care is to be taken as described above** an inquisitorial minuteness is not to be employed in the examination of persons for admission to membership. The essential requirements are competent knowledge of the Gospel, profession of faith in Christ, and a life and conduct consistent with that profession as far as can be judged outwardly. Whilst the importance of correct doctrine is not to be underestimated, members are not required to subscribe the Confession of Faith as are office-bearers.

2.18 **Communicant members**, unless under process of discipline, have the right to have their names entered on the appropriate roll and, in proper circumstances, to approach the appropriate church court by petition, and to sign a call. Communicant members are entitled to baptism for their children and, when leaving a congregation, to a certificate of their standing; they are also entitled to vote in all matters competent to members. **A Session shall not issue a Disjunction Certificate if there is any suspicion/allegation of sexual or domestic abuse without first investigating the matter. The result of the investigation must be duly minuted, and the Certificate with-held or qualified if necessary.**

2.28a. The **minutes** of session are kept in a durable and well-bound minute book with numbered pages. **Minutes and papers of Session are kept in a secure location.** Blank spaces between sets of minutes are to be cancelled by ruling and initialling. At each meeting the first business after the opening is **normally** the confirmation of the previous minutes. These must contain the names of those who were present. Any corrections are initialled by the clerk and moderator and noted in the subsequent minutes. The record is then confirmed as a correct record of what was transacted, and for this reason the wording of confirmed minutes cannot be changed without the permission of the presbytery. (Of course, a subsequent meeting may decide to implement a different decision, but the record of the earlier decision is not touched.)

**b. Not less than annually the Session must minute to the following effect:** 'Each member of Session certifies that he is aware of the current Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct, faithfully keeps it, and is also aware of the legal requirements under State and Church law to report suspected or actual cases of child abuse or pornography. Each member also certifies that he is not aware, after suitable enquiry (including of deacons and other persons in positions of authority), of any rumour or allegation in breach of the policy and code of conduct except.....' [here state the exception and the action to be taken].

c. Session minutes and records are **confidential** within the courts of the church. It will not normally be necessary to keep a record apart from the normal minutes for discipline cases, but in any case of actual or alleged child abuse, certified copies of the material in the case are lodged with the Presbytery Clerk as insurance against the originals, which must be retained for **at least 50 years**, being mislaid.

2.29 Decisions of the court necessarily involving advice to third parties may be given by extract minute without specific authorisation, but in other cases the session is to authorise the provision of an extract minute.

### **2.30 ROLLS, REGISTERS & PRIVACY**

2.30a. The Roll of Communicant Members and the Roll of Baptised Members are to be carefully kept and regularly revised by the session, normally not less than once a year, and always before the election of a minister (see 4.59). A Register of adherents (2.19) should be kept. Admission and removal dates should be carefully noted on these records with explicit minutes explaining admission and removal procedures. An attendance register is also good practice to assist in pastoral care.

b. A **register** of all office-bearers and persons working with children shall be kept with relevant dates and details of Working with Children Checks [WWCC]. A copy is lodged with the Presbytery not less than once a year. Session shall see that WWCC are kept up to date and that Safe Church training as specified by Synod or Presbytery is carried out.

The Privacy Policy adopted by Synod 2017 is set out under Law & Advisory in the Committee Decisions Section of this Handbook.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESBYTERY**

add

4.33b The Presbytery, as having responsibility for the oversight of congregations within the bounds, must include Safe Church issues on the agenda, maintain a list of the names, card numbers and expiry date of all persons requiring Working with Children Checks, ensure the Policy and Code of Practice are observed and that Safe Church training is provided and that any regular supply persons approved by Presbytery also comply with relevant state law and the PCEA Policy and Code of Conduct. The Clerk of Presbytery is ordinarily the person for reporting by congregations, and the Presbytery takes such steps as it considers appropriate to ensure the preservation of congregational records that are relevant to any child abuse case that might arise in the future, usually by certified copies being lodged with the Presbytery.

### **10. Immigration visa changes**

Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs David Coleman has announced changes to the Minister of Religion Labour Agreement which will allow religious institutions to sponsor overseas workers under the additional occupation of 'Religious Assistant'. This broadens visa sponsorship options which were formerly limited to the occupation of 'Minister of Religion'. Thresholds for sponsoring the occupation of 'Minister of Religion' have also been made more flexible. Previously, a nominee for 'Minister of Religion' was required to work in a specified location in the most senior position. Under the new measures, the nominee can work in any senior position. Sponsors must be a religious institution under the Migration Regulations and provide evidence of Australian business registration and charitable status. The sponsor must also meet salary requirements unless a concession is awarded owing to a vow of poverty being declared by the nominee. Nominees will still need to meet occupation requirements related to qualifications and skills. Sponsors will need to demonstrate why the nominated position is unable to be filled by an Australian worker. Temporary Skill Shortage visas under the labour agreement stream can be granted for up to 4 years. The new measures will take effect from Monday 11 March 2019.

## **PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

1. That Handbook 7.3 be amended as stated in the Report.
2. That Handbook 5.38 be amended as stated in the Report.
3. Congregations and other church entities are recommended to seek deferral of the application of the Single Touch Payment stem of remitting salary and PAYG deductions to the Australian Taxation Office until 1 January 2020, and meanwhile notice be taken of suitable measures to operate the system at minimal cost and burden on Church Treasurers.

4. The Synod transmit the following overture to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act 1697, for approval or disapproval, with Presbyteries to note any specific areas of disapproval in the proposed legislation when sending in returns and to indicate approval or disapproval of each of points 1, 2 and 3 in the overture. The returns to be in the Clerk of Synod hands by 30 November 2018, and meantime Synod passes the overture as an Interim act in force until next Synod.

Whereas Christians are required by the Lord to think, speak and act in ways that are God-honouring, biblically obedient and motivated by the Christian values of love, mercy and justice; and

Whereas the incidence of child and other abuse in the community in church and welfare institutions has been highlighted of recent years; and

Whereas there is considerable laxity among many professing Christians as to the norm Scripture requires in the matter of personal relationships, including sexual relationships and domestic violence; and

Whereas the measures the PCEA already has in place address the problem, particularly the mandatory reporting of abuse and the interviewing of vulnerable children and adults, but do not take full account of recent civil legislation or adequately spell out the standards Scripture requires;

Therefore Synod

(1) adopt for the PCEA Australia-wide the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct set out in Appendix 1 of the Law and Advisory Committee Report 2019 and direct that it be carefully followed by all Presbyteries, Congregations, Committees and organisations of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.

(2) replace the Guidelines for Church Workers 2003 (as revised 2004, 2013) to read as set out in Appendix 2 of the Law and Advisory Committee Report 2019.

(3) adopt the changes to the PCEA Handbook of Practice and Procedure set out in Section 9 of the Law and Advisory Committee Report to Synod 2019.

## **APPENDIX 1 – SAFE CHURCH – PCEA**

Safe Church – PCEA *applies to all persons holding a position of authority within the church, which term includes ministers, elders, deacons, Sunday-school or youth leaders, and all congregations, presbyteries, organisations, and committees within the church. It is our commitment to dealing with abuse within the church as defined in the Safe Church PCEA Policy and Code of Conduct. It does not apply to any other form of abuse, grievance or personal injury claim. It is made available in congregations and the PCEA website.*

### **A: SAFE CHURCH POLICY**

1. We commit ourselves to respect other people's minds, emotions and bodies. We have established **Safe Church - PCEA** as the public criteria according to which the community may judge the resolve of the church to address issues of abuse within the church.
2. We acknowledge and accept the trust granted to us by those who are taking part in church activities, their families, and the wider community. We therefore commit ourselves to striving to ensure that all our actions are morally upright.
3. We acknowledge that, as a church, our responses to victims in the past have varied greatly. We express regret and sorrow for the hurt caused whenever the response has denied or minimised the pain that victims have experienced, or caused them to experience further pain.
4. We are committed to establishing a process that strives for truth and confidentiality. We will ensure as far as possible that a compassionate response is the first priority in all allegations, even at a time when it is not yet certain that the allegations are accurate, through offering assistance, protection and care without passing judgement or prejudicing the rights of the alleged offender. We acknowledge that concealing the truth is contrary to the character of God, unjust to victims and a disservice to offenders.
5. We understand and value the need for support to all parties involved in an allegation, including the aggrieved person and the alleged offender, and we actively seek to provide this support.
6. We acknowledge the personal and public difficulties that a false, misconceived, malicious or vexatious allegation can cause for the person accused. We will take whatever steps are possible to address these difficulties.
7. We are willing to know the full extent of the problem of abuse and the causes of such behaviour within the church. We will strive to be aware of our legal responsibilities and obligations in relation to prevention, reporting and processing requirements and seek to meet them at all times.
8. We acknowledge that we have had to make changes in the way that we relate to children and young people and others, as a result, some good things have been lost, however we will bear this loss to ensure as far as possible that the vulnerable are safe.
9. We will ensure as far as possible that all people in positions of authority within the church and/or working with children and young people are aware of the appropriate standard of conduct and boundaries. We require those who work on behalf of the church to indicate their agreement with this policy statement and work towards providing an environment that prevents abuse.
10. We believe that churches ought to be places of safety and refuge for children, young people and others, where they should be and feel safe from any threat when on church property or involved in activities operated by the church, or accessing services provided by the church. We believe that the church should be a place where people can disclose abuse and have it dealt with effectively.
11. As a church we are committed to the implementation of the **Child Safe Standards** approved by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2019.
12. We will establish a prevention strategy that includes screening, sound recruitment and selection procedures, clear boundaries, risk identification and management, education, support, supervision and training. We will not allow known sexual offenders to have a leadership role in the church.
13. We acknowledge that the age of consent for sexual activity is determined by legislation. However, we are mindful that this must be read in the light of our moral and spiritual responsibility. All people in a position of authority within the church, be it real or perceived, paid or unpaid, have a moral and spiritual responsibility towards those over whom they have authority. In this situation it is never appropriate to take part in sexual activity of any kind, regardless of the person's age. We affirm that sexual behaviour belongs in a marriage relationship between a man and a woman only and that in this context it is a good gift of God.
14. All allegations will be notified to the appropriate external authorities, investigated thoroughly and determined as described in **Safe Church - PCEA**.
15. Irrespective of any other action that may be taken by authorities outside the church, the church reserves the right to exercise its powers according to its Handbook of Practice and Procedure and **Safe Church - PCEA** wherever this action is deemed necessary.

## **B: SAFE CHURCH CODE OF CONDUCT**

*The following constitutes the church's Code of Conduct for behaviour for a person in a position of authority within the church, which term includes ministers, elders, deacon, Sunday-school or youth leaders and all supervising children:*

1. As a person in a position of authority within the church you must always be concerned about the integrity of your position, likely perceptions of the church and the wider community, and the need to acknowledge the real or perceived power given to you as a result of holding this position. You should avoid situations where you are vulnerable to temptation or where your conduct may be construed to be a breach of this Code of Conduct. You will make yourself familiar with the provisions of Safe Church - PCEA
2. You must not fail to take action to prevent to the best of your ability and report as required any of the following:
  - child abuse,
  - a child or young person at risk of significant harm,
  - reportable conduct,
  - sexual misconduct, and / or
  - conduct that breaches this Safe Church Code of Conduct.
3. Sexualised behaviour is any behaviour that may reasonably be perceived to be of a sexual nature according to the standards of the time by the person to whom it is directed. Sexualised behaviour is only permitted as set out in the Word of God. Except with one's own marriage partner of the opposite sex, all sexualised behaviour is forbidden. If you are not married you must abstain from all sexual or sexualised behaviour.
4. You must not engage in or condone any behaviour that could be considered to be:
  - child abuse,
  - putting a child or young person at risk of significant harm,
  - reportable conduct, and / or
  - conduct that breaches this Safe Church Code of Conduct.
5. You must not engage in or condone any behaviour that could be considered to be sexual misconduct, understanding that sexual misconduct is contact or invitation, via any means, of a sexual nature which is inconsistent with the integrity of a person in a position of authority within the church. Sexual misconduct includes any behaviour that could be reasonably considered to be sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, coercion or grooming of an adult or a child or young person.
6. Sexual exploitation refers to any form of sexualised behaviour with an adult, child or young person, whether or not there is consent and regardless of who initiated the behaviour, where that behaviour is contrary to the Word of God. Therefore, you will not among other things engage in or condone any of the following:
  - behaviour or a pattern of behaviour aimed at the involvement of others in sexual acts, including but not limited to coercion or grooming behaviour,
  - sexualised behaviour with a person below the age of consent,
  - sexualised behaviour with a person with whom there is a supervisory, pastoral care, or counselling relationship,
  - the production, distribution, possession of or accessing of pornographic material of any kind,
  - taking advantage of the conscious or unconscious use of sexually provocative behaviour that some victims of abuse display,
  - engaging the services of a prostitute, or soliciting or providing such services,
  - visiting, without legitimate reason, a brothel or any place maintained for the abuse-of-sex industry,
  - viewing or reading, in print or otherwise, material of a sexually explicit nature, except for a legitimate purpose,
  - participating in sexually explicit conversation via social media, chat rooms, gaming or any other means, and
  - asking, without legitimate reason, any questions about the intimate details of a person's sexual life or providing details of your own sexual life.
7. Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexualised behaviour, whether intended or not, in relation to an adult, child or young person where that person reasonably feels in all circumstances offended, belittled or threatened. Such behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. Therefore, you will not, among other things engage in or condone:
  - implicit or explicit demands or suggestions for sexual activities,
  - making any gesture, action or comment of a sexual nature to a person or about a person in their presence,
  - making jokes containing sexual references or innuendo using any form of communication,
  - exposure to any form of sexually explicit or suggestive material, including but not limited to pornography of any kind,
  - physical contact that is inappropriate to the situation or uncomfortable or confusing for the receiver, including kissing, hugging, touching, pinching, patting or aggressive physical conduct,
  - touching any sexual part of the body, including the "only kidding" or accidental occasions of sexual touch,

- generating or participating in inappropriate personal correspondence (including electronic communication) in respect of sexual or romantic feelings or in breach of the Code of Conduct,
  - inappropriate giving of gifts, including those of a sexual, suggestive or romantic nature that is in breach of the Code of Conduct,
  - inappropriate or unnecessary discussion of, or inquiry about, personal matters of a sexual nature,
  - inappropriate intrusion of personal space or physical privacy, including being alone in a bedroom or bathroom or allowing inappropriate exposure during activities that require dressing or changing clothes,
  - voyeurism, and
  - persistent following or stalking.
8. Coercion or grooming behaviour refers to physical or psychological actions intrinsic to initiating or hiding abusive behaviour, which involved the manipulative cultivation of relationships with vulnerable adults, children and / or young people, their carers and others in authority. You will not exhibit any behaviour that could be considered to be coercion or grooming behaviour.
9. With regard to children and young people:
- You will not visit a child or young person in their own home unless a parent is present or you visit with another person in a position of authority within the church with parental permission.
  - You will not conduct a camp or other activity involving overnight accommodation without appropriate “camp parents” (ideally a married couple over the age of 25 years, of known maturity and Christian commitment) approved by the supervising body.
  - You will not provide any form of accommodation for any reason where there is not strict segregation by sex, with the exception of married couples and families. Supervision of children and/or young people must be provided by a person of the same sex.
  - You will ensure that any activity involving children and / or young people is open to observation by parents and other adults with a legitimate interest.
10. With regard to adults, children and young people:
- You will not condone or participate in bullying behaviour, where bullying is the repeated seeking out or targeting of an adult, child or young person to cause them distress and humiliation or to exploit them, including exclusion from a peer group, intimidation and extortion.
  - You will not condone or participate in domestic or family violence, which involves violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour carried out by a partner, carer or family member to control, dominate or instil fear. This includes physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial or other types of abuse,
  - You will not participate in or allow nude swimming or other such activities.
  - You will not participate in or allow initiations and secret ceremonies.
11. With regard to adults, children and young people, either the Presbytery or Session may make temporary variations in respect to the details of the following. These temporary variations will be formally recorded by the Presbytery or Session and will be made on a restricted basis for individuals in specific circumstances for a specific period of time. Where no temporary variation is formally recorded, the following will apply without change:
- You will take care to ensure an appropriate balance of transparency and confidentiality so that the private concerns of others are not disclosed or revealed improperly. In ordinary circumstances, when you are providing pastoral care to, or working with members of the opposite sex, you will strive to do so in an environment that allows visual surveillance and, where reasonable, have other people within hearing distance.
  - You will not allow a child to sleep in close proximity to an adult, other than a parent or guardian, unless there is a significant separation, and privacy of all parties is respected.
  - You will not allow an adult to share accommodation with one child or young person only unless they are a parent or guardian of that child or young person.
  - You will not drive a child or young person unaccompanied.
- Where specified provisions cannot be followed in an emergency, the circumstances of the emergency and the actions taken should be reported to and approved by the supervising body, usually the Session of the Congregation concerned. Where the actions taken are not approved they will be considered to be a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- Any breaches of this Code of Conduct for any reason will be reported to the appropriate supervising body as soon as possible. The supervising body will then report the matter to the Presbytery or relevant Synod Committee as the case may.

**GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH WORKERS, 2019**

To be inserted at the front of Session, Deacons' Courts and Presbytery Minute books:

**A. General**

1. Those activities of the congregation not the prerogative of the minister are under the ultimate supervision of the Session. The Session should know what is happening in the various areas. If necessary, Session will appoint a liaison person to report on a particular activity.

**B. Guarding against Sexual or other Misconduct** (see more fully *Handbook*, Ch 2)

1. All ministers, elders and deacons and leaders of Sunday school, youth groups, camps etc. must be approved under relevant State or Federal laws as people suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults, sign their acceptance of the PCEA Safe Church Code of Conduct approved by Synod 2019 and follow the training requirements of the church.

2. The supervision of others should be carried out by appropriately experienced people who are well known to the Congregation and have been connected with it for at least twelve months. No person with a previous record of sexual molestation may be involved in a supervisory position. Sexual abuse by known offenders is not covered under the Church's Public Liability insurance.

3. The church noticeboard in the church foyer and/or church hall shall display a notice stating the PCEA Safe Church Code of Conduct applies to all officebearers and persons in authority, noting where a copy may be obtained (including any web-address) and to whom any concerns may be directed.

4. Leaders of church activities must report any suspected physical or sexual abuse to the Session immediately and the Synod's procedures followed. No allegation may be trivialised. Mandatory reporting to Police or other Regulatory bodies may be required.

5. In the case of persons from other congregations or denominations applying for membership without a clear disjunction certificate, the Session must check with the previous church, and would be well advised to do so in any case, and document the finding. Any concern should be documented and advice sought as appropriate.

6. To ensure that there are no outstanding issues or adverse history Sessions must be careful concerning the background history of those who apply for membership. Pastoral care and home visitation are important in this respect. A simple form to collect basic data is recommended and must be kept securely in the Session records.

7. A Session shall not issue a Disjunction Certificate if, after careful enquiry, there is any suspicion/allegation of abuse without first investigating the matter. The result of the

investigation must be duly minuted, and the Certificate with-held or qualified if necessary.

8. Not less than annually the Session must minute to the following effect: *'Each member of Session certifies that he is aware of the current Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct, faithfully keeps it, and is also aware of the legal requirements under State and Church law to report suspected or actual cases of child abuse or pornography. Each member also certifies that he is not aware, after suitable enquiry (including of deacons and other persons in positions of authority), of any rumour or allegation in breach of the policy and code of conduct except.....'* [here state the exception and the action to be taken].

**C. Those Working or Using Church Property**

1. When work is being done by volunteers on the church premises, a competent person should supervise, particularly when heights, or the use of special tools, are involved. Lighting, paths, steps and handrails, as well as the condition of floorcoverings, electric cords/switches and access to chemicals, need regular checking.

2. Non-PCEA groups using Church facilities must commit in writing to having proper supervision of their people at all times, adhering to relevant state or Commonwealth laws, as well as meeting other conditions set by the local Deacons' Court or by the Minister, each acting in accordance with Section 3.18 of the *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*. Such conditions should include no smoking; no raffles or other gambling; appropriate Public Liability Insurance; responsibility for damage; and provision for termination by either side. Formal leases require Presbytery approval, see 3.19.

**D. Protection of Privacy** (see more fully *Handbook*, Section 2.30a)

1. Membership lists should only be used outside the Session according to a procedure agreed by Session communicated to all those whose names will be included in such a list.

2. Health information secured for camps or outings is to be used only for the purpose obtained and kept in confidence. Records of such information should not be kept after their purpose has been fulfilled.

3. It is important also to exercise care in revealing personal information on notice sheets or in church announcements, electronic or otherwise. Before revealing personal information, permission should be obtained from the person concerned.

# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Founded in 1846

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Last Name:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

First Names:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Name you prefer to be called: .....

Home Address: ..... PC.....

Telephone: ..... Mobile: ..... Email: .....

Occupation: .....

Marital status: Single, De facto, Married, Divorced, Remarried, Widow/er

Nationality: .....

Spouse Name: .....

Children under 18 living at home (if not already on spouse's application):

Name	Birthday	Baptised?
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

Have you read the *Introduction and Invitation* booklet? Yes No (circle one)

We receive into membership those who can give a credible confession of faith along lines set out in the booklet. Do you have any questions about this? Yes No (circle one)

.....

**BAPTISM**

Have you been baptized? Yes No (circle one) When? .....

In which Church? .....

**PREVIOUS CHURCH**

Previous Church before this? ..... (name)

How long at that church? .....

Do you have a transfer letter/disjunction certificate? ..... (If so please attach)

Did you leave on good terms? Yes No (circle one)

**SAFE CHURCH**

We maintain procedures to ensure our church is safe for children and others from sexual, physical or other abuse. Please ask for a copy and read it. If you have ever been charged with a criminal offence give details here: otherwise write 'None'.

.....  
.....

**GENERAL**

Language/s spoken other than English:

.....

Other information you want to share about yourself (hobbies, interests, previous roles in church) etc:

.....  
.....

Are there any special needs/health issues we should be aware of?

.....

Any dietary restrictions?

.....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

**The personal information provided is needed to ensure we can provide appropriate pastoral care for you and to assist in furthering a supportive Christian community. Dates of birth and personal history are confidential to the eldership in accordance with our privacy policy.**

Office Use:

Session Minute: / /

## TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Committee corresponded over the year by email and some phone contact amongst members. The Committee's business has consisted almost exclusively of the evaluation of Mr Duncan Hickey at the close of his formal studies. Due to this and other matters, development of the Eldership course continues in abeyance and does not form part of this report. We would ask the Synod for a continuance to further develop this resource, as per our remit, under various convener-ships, since 1983.

**Candidature: Mr Duncan Hickey:** This last element of Mr Hickey's studies, by an intensive course, was completed on 15th May, 2018. We are pleased to report that Mr Duncan Hickey has fulfilled all the requirements of the ACT course, through Christ College, and has now attained his M.Div. degree, completed to a very high standard (GPA 3.38). He will have had his graduation ceremony by the time of this Synod.

Mr Hickey (M.Div., B.A., B.Sc., Dip.AncLang.) was originally interviewed by the Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2013. He commenced studies at PTC, Sydney (now Christ College) in 2014 (he extended his course to 4 years due to family commitments that year). During his time of study Duncan also completed one 4 week placement (with a few weeks extension work later) in Dec. 2016 -Jan. 2017 under the mentorship of Rev. Robin Tso and another 8 week placement, also with Rev. Tso, in Dec. 2017-Jan 2018. The reason for these placements under the fledgling CPS was to address and evaluate the pastoral and homiletic skills of the candidate and equip him more fully than formal study only. He has completed 2 essays for the Committee to address our requirement of examining PCEA history and distinctives.

After a review of Mr Hickey's training under the oversight of the Committee from 2013 until the writing of this report, the Committee is pleased to say that Duncan has excelled in academic studies and met the requirements of the Committee in this regard. Duncan's homiletic skills are improving but will, as with all new candidates (and seasoned men too!), need continued practice. We suggest that Duncan receive some close guidance and encouragement from his own Session. Regarding the history and distinctives of the PCEA, some concerns remain with the stance Mr Hickey took in his written responses, particularly regarding adherence to our distinctives. We have recommended to Central Presbytery, that they closely investigate and examine these issues with Duncan before proceeding to licensing.

At the behest of Central Presbytery, with the assistance of the Training of Ministry Committee, though not officially part of the CPS, nor under our oversight, Duncan underwent 5 weeks of placement in Narre Warren, under the guidance of Rev. Andres Miranda. Duncan had opportunities there to preach in various Melbourne charges, and undertake other pastoral work. At the close of the placement period, Rev. Miranda provided a positive report on Duncan's development in the ministry.

We therefore report and certify that Mr Hickey has completed the normal course of studies prescribed by Act 16, Synod 1983 (amended 1991, 2013), viz: (i) a degree course in a Synod-Approved training college – an M.Div. at Christ College, Sydney; (ii) pastoral care in theory and practice – mostly by supplement through the CPS in two placements over 2 years; and (iii) written work on PCEA history and distinctives - 2 essays.

**Request for Finance for Elder Training:** At the end of 2018, a request was received from the Session Clerk of All Nations Congregation to the Committee regarding the approval in principle of monies being supplied to All Nations Session for some of the men there to undergo courses at PTC, Melbourne. This request was forwarded to the members of the Committee and discussed after the Family Camp, at the end of January. Notwithstanding a further letter from Southern Presbytery supporting this request, it was the recommendation of the members of the Committee who responded that, while this form of funding was a good idea in principle, it was outside our remit to send Elders to undergo fee-based formal training at our Synod-approved College. The Committee does have the remit however to provide free resources and a curriculum for Elder training, and this is available, admittedly still in development, at [elders.pcea.org.au](http://elders.pcea.org.au). The Committee also believes that the training of Elders for office, or whilst in office, is the province of the local Session first, with assistance and oversight of the Presbytery. The request was for funding for All Nations alone as a special case. If we agreed to fund this proposal, it would be remiss not to extend the offer of funds to other congregations, equally in need of "up-skilling" for their Elders. The Committee, with its rightful focus on the training of Candidates for the ministry in the whole denomination (of which we are in short supply at present), has to reserve and use all available funds for that purpose. The role of Home Missionary may be an option to consider for any man that any Session sees has potential and aptitude. The Committee always welcomes such applications, along with any for regular Candidacy.

**Student Handbook and CPS Curriculum:** No consultation occurred during the year on the subject of a Student Handbook nor the detailed CPS Curriculum. We ask the Synod to allow us to continue to research this matter and develop useful resources for clear guidance to students and evaluators.

**Proposed Deliverances:**

1. That Synod recognize and applaud Mr Duncan Hickey on the completion of his formal studies for the M. Div. degree to a consistent and exemplary high standard. That we thank the Lord for His providence for Duncan over this period of formal training and through his bereavement, and commit Duncan and his family to prayer for the days to come.
2. That Synod recognizes that Mr Duncan Hickey has met all requirements of the Training of Ministry Committee for a normal course of study, that the Committee certifies the same, and that his further training with a view to licensing is placed in the hands of the Central Presbytery (in accordance with Handbook 4.49 and 4.50).
3. That Synod authorize the continued development of a stated curriculum under the Candidate Placement Scheme to augment formal studies over the entire student candidacy.
4. That a draft Student Handbook, for the use of student and evaluator to orient and guide the candidacy, be produced.
5. That Synod thank the All Nations Session for their proposal to train Elders and encourage applications to the Committee for any men they feel are suitable for training as Home Missionaries or Candidates.

# **INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE 2018.**

**Members: R. Tso (Convener 2017), G. D. Ball, T. I. Leggott, R. S. Ward**

## **1. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE FRATERNAL RELATIONS.**

### **1:1 Free Church of Scotland (FCS). 1954 and 2005.**

As agreed by our Synod 2017 and 2018, the Convener was commissioned to bring greetings to the Free Church of Scotland. During the deputation in Scotland, the Convener was invited to address the General Assembly, as well as many opportunities given to preach in the Highlands and on the Isle of Lewis. In all of those occasions, along with congregational fellowship meetings and meeting with the Western Isle Presbytery, the Convener was able to convey greetings from our denomination, as well as the blessings, challenges, and needs in our denomination. It had been a great opportunity to get to know some of new ministers, to continue to build relationships even at personal level. It was also a great opportunity to encourage in particular those Psalm-singing congregations.

### **1:2 The Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ). 2002.**

### **1:3 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). 2007.**

### **1:4 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia (RPCA). 2004.**

We look forward to welcoming Rev Graeme Hart as fraternal delegate to Synod. Our 2006 offer of mutual eligibility still stands.

An invitation has been sent to us regarding their Annual Presbytery meeting on Saturday 4th May in Geelong.

### **1:5 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (RPCI). 2006.**

Our request in 2006 for mutual eligibility with the RPCI has not had a formal response. Perhaps it is understandable that the RPCI would not wish to take action while our offer of mutual eligibility made to the RPCA in 2006 remains unrequited.

### **1:6 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA). 2008.**

We look forward to welcoming Rev Bruce Martin as fraternal delegate to Synod.

Our request in 2008 for mutual eligibility with the RPCNA was not granted but fraternal relations was agreed and we have had the pleasure of receiving delegates. However, it is understandable that the RPCNA would not wish to take action while our offer of mutual eligibility made to the RPCA in 2006 remains unrequited.

### **1:7 The Presbyterian Free Church of India (PFCI). 2010.**

### **1: 8 The Southern Presbyterian Church of Australia (SPCA). 2014.**

We look forward to welcoming to Rev Ian Hall of Launceston as fraternal delegate to Synod. The Convener was invited to speak at their family camp in Feb 2019, and talks have resumed regarding deepening our relationship, and the possibility of mutual eligibility was explored also.

### **1: 9 The Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA). 2014.**

We look forward to welcoming to Rev Lourens Nel as fraternal delegate to Synod. Our two respective Inter-church relations committees are working closely together on hosting the ICRC Regional conference in Melbourne with Rowland Ward and Lourens Nel attending to the arrangements in Melbourne.

### **1: 10 The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). 2015.**

## **2. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE CONTACT.**

### **2:1 The Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia (PRCA).**

### **2:2 The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPCA).**

### **2.3 Presbyterian Church of Australia**

### **2.4 Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) FCC. 2018**

We look forward to welcoming to Rev John Macleod as delegate to Synod.

During the deputation in Scotland, the Convener was invited to address the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)'s General Assembly, as well as to preach at Knock & Point FCC (where the Rev Alasdair Macleod is the Convener of their Ecumenical Relations Committee.) The desire to have closer Inter-church relationship was expressed, and the address to the General Assembly was warmly welcome the General Assembly. The Convener was invited to meet briefly with their Ecumenical Relations Committee, and the matter of establishing mutual eligibility was raised.

Also, formal advice by Principal Clerk of Assembly, Rev John Macleod, states, "The Committee welcomed the desire of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia for closer relations with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). It was noted that in terms of formal relationship no action had been taken by the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) to modify or curtail the relationship which had existed with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia." It is also worth noting that the FCC's Ecumenical Relations Committee are unanimous in welcoming the prospect of such a relationship being restored.

An invitation has been sent to us regarding their General Assembly from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019.

### **2.5 Associated Presbyterian Churches of Scotland. 2018**

During the deputation in Scotland, the Convener was invited to address General Assembly in Inverness, to convey greetings from our denomination and also to seek the possibility of further Inter-church relations. The Convener and his family had been graciously offered accommodation in the vacant APC manse in Stornoway, and the Convener had been invited to preach in the local congregation one Lord's day. The APC Church Relations Committee have expressed their desire to explore the possibility of mutual eligibility.

### **3.1 The International Conference of Reformed Churches.**

As we did not include it last year, the letter we sent to the RCN in August 2017 following the ICRC in Canada is attached for information. A recent email from the RCN to the Presbyterian Banner editor states: "In my estimate there is a general acceptance of the defensibility of the decisions, in the sense that they are *not* symptomatic of a lower view of scripture, but are instead an outcome - surprising, perhaps, to some, and definitely not convincing to all - which is based on a faithful appraisal of the biblical evidence. In short, there seems to be an agreement to disagree, in line with the apostolic injunction of Romans 14.5. In a significant number of congregations women have already been installed as office-bearers (and one woman has been declared eligible for call as a minister by her classis); other congregations have decided not to proceed in this direction; and yet others are awaiting response of Synod Goes 2020 to the overtures for revision of the decisions. One might therefore say: *confusion reigns*, or with a more charitable view: *things are in flux*... The issue is not tearing the churches apart, that can be said, I think, but it is raising questions about where we're headed."

### **4.1 The World Reformed Fellowship (WRF).**

### **5.1 Psalm-singing Conference/Association**

As a means to further our Inter-church relations and also to encourage our young people in the singing of the word of God and further fellowship, several denominations, i.e. RPCA and SPC have expressed their interests in having an interdenominational Psalm-singing conference/association in Australia. This proposal has been passed to the Church and Nation Committee.

**Proposed Deliverances.**

1. The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia gives thanks to God for the churches with whom we have formal fraternal relations and for those churches with whom we have contact and resolve to pray for the Lord's blessing upon their work and witness.
2. Synod encourages the Committee in further discussions with the Southern Presbyterian Church regarding deepening our inter-church relations, with a view to the possibility of mutual eligibility.
3. Synod, without being drawn into the debate over the merit or otherwise of the division in the Free Church of Scotland in 2000, approve in principle mutual eligibility with the Free Church (Continuing) subject to their General Assembly's decision in May 2019.
4. Synod commends the Dr Ward's organisation with the CRCA's Ecumenical Committee of the ICRC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference to be held in Melbourne 1 to 3 October 2019 and encourage our ministers and office-bearers to attend.

## **YOUTH AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

Members: S. Carswell (Convenor), A. Miranda, A. Kerridge, T. Reeve, C. Hamilton and S. Smith

In 2018 the Y&F committee continued to focus on ministries that strengthen intra-congregational fellowship among the youth and families in the church as well as encouraging Bible study and scripture memorisation for covenant children.

**Youth Camp 2018:** The 2018 Youth Camp for 15 – 30 year olds was held over the Easter long weekend at John and Judy Greensill’s property in Northern Rivers congregation. Their property was well equipped with sheds, outside toilets, showers and ample space. Donations by church members kept participant’s costs low. 19 young adults attended from Brisbane, Hastings, Manning, Hunter Barrington and Ulverstone. Robin Tso spoke on “What does the Church mean to you?”

**Family Camp 2019:** The 2019 Family Camp was held at Elanora – Uniting Venues in the northern suburbs of Sydney from 1-4 January 2019. Andres Miranda spoke on “Walking Behind Jesus – Reflections on Christian Discipleship” The talks can be heard at <https://bit.ly/2CXyVbt>  
The committee believes that the Family Camps are an important event in the life of the church, providing opportunities for strengthening fellowship and deepening our love for God and his Word.

**Essays:** In 2018 essays prizes were given to children from the Brisbane, Ulverstone and Hastings congregations. The work submitted showed an impressive level of Bible-reading and understanding, which will produce joy and devotion in the spiritual development of children and young adults in the church. The children and Sunday school teachers appreciated the comments back from Andres Miranda regarding the work.

**Prescribed Youth Work 2019:** The prescribed youth work and essay questions were published in the Banner

**Birthday card Greeting:** The Y&F Committee is very grateful to the many years that Margaret Kinder dedicated to the role of sending Birthday greetings to the children of the church. She has decided to retire from this role and Amelia O’Dell has taken on the responsibility.

**Search Work:** The committee is also thankful to Irene Steel for her ongoing commitment to the Search Work. This has been a very helpful tool for our children to grow in the knowledge of Christ. Regrettably the number of youth submitting completed search work has diminished over the years. The committee encourages congregations (possibly using Sunday school) to utilise the Search work, Essay and Memory work in the teaching and building up the children and youth of the church.

### **Proposed Deliverances:**

1. Synod recognises the importance of giving special attention to children and youth in the Church and commits to keep praying for the work of Sunday-school teachers and youth leaders as they serve God in our local congregations.
2. Synod thanks Margaret Kinder for her years of service to the Lord and His church for sending Birthday card greetings to the children and that Synod upholds Amelia O’Dell in prayer as she continues in the role. Synod thanks Irene Steel for her dedication to the scripture search work over the years and acknowledge God’s blessing for her commitment and encouragement in continuing this role.
1. In addition to the responsibilities of shepherding God’s flock, Synod members are also asked to encourage church members to participate in future Family Camps and Youth Camps.
2. Members of Synod commit themselves to keep praying for the spiritual development of the children and youth in our church. We are conscious of the lure of the world and sin that can draw our young people away from the truth of the gospel and the faith. Therefore, constant intercession be made on behalf of our youth, so that they will have the courage to stand firm in the Lord, to resist secular pressure, find their identity in fellowship with Christ, and participate joyfully in their local churches.

# MISSIONS COMMITTEE

D.K. Muldoon (convener), J. Greensill, T.I. Leggott, J.D. Klazinga, D.P. Smith, R. Ball

## MISSION FIELD REPORTS

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6. Central India
7. Colegio San Andres
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### 1. Australian Indigenous Ministries (from T.I .Leggott)

My support as a missionary of the PCEA came to a close in May 2018. As the year progressed it became obvious that there was still a need for my continuing on as General Director for some time to transition to new leadership. The mission agreed to fund my support until November 2018. It was a great blessing from the Lord, and a relief to me, to have new man recruited and appointed to the role in September 2018. Mr Roy Hatfield, and elder from Grafton Presbyterian Church and TAFE head teacher, was the first indigenous man appointed to the role of CEO of AIM. He came with a lot of knowledge of the field and personnel.

The mission continued to struggle with the way ahead and the need for change. In my report to Synod 2018, among other things, I wrote:

*In February 2018 the AIM Council resolved as follows:*

1. *There was general recognition that AIM needed to move forward and that major change was needed.*
2. *That every effort be made by Council to resolve outstanding issues, to develop a sense of unity and purpose for the future, and to achieve this end the advice and guidance of an independent assessor would be engaged.*
3. *That if AIM NT Field Personnel decide not to join with Pioneers by February 2019, then they could continue with their present ministries, but it is presently indicated that AIM could not continue after that with the provision of support and resources. All support and ongoing provision of personal resources would have to be sourced individually, except that AIM would commit to the payment of rental assistance for Rhonda Coats until the close of 2019.*
4. *That the modified draft constitution as circulated be adopted to ensure the ongoing development, care and support of the various AIM churches in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.*
5. *That Neil Bootes work in consultation with Trevor Leggott to ensure a smooth transition to the new role of Secretary / Public Officer as Trevor anticipates retirement, with an expectation that Neil would assume this role late in 2018.*
6. *That every avenue would be explored to seek out and recruit a suitably gifted and qualified person to take on the full time role of Secretary / Public Officer.*
7. *That these changes be communicated to all AIM supporters, field personnel and churches.*

*I have informed the AIM Council that I will be retiring from the directorship of AIM at the end of May 2018. There is yet much to be done to transition to the new model with new leadership. Humanly speaking I am not sure what the future holds. I have told the Council that I am prepared to bridge that transition process until*

*the end of 2018. I ask that we might continue in earnest prayer as we look to the Lord for his leading and guiding to sustain a much needed Gospel ministry amongst the first Australians.*

I had thought that, having made those decisions in February 2018, a clear strategy for a way ahead had been laid out. Unfortunately that has not proved to be the case. There has been considerable back-tracking and confusion with some insisting that the organisation “rebuild” in its present format, despite many years of not being able to recruit personnel, nor give appropriate member a care.

I concluded my time with AIM in November 2018. At the time I indicated that I would not play any part in any ongoing way, but would be happy to help with consultation for any issues that might arise where I had known the history.

It is my prayer that the Gospel ministry to Indigenous Australians will continue through the agency of AIM into the future, that the Lord will show the clear way ahead, and that those charged with oversight will understand and walk in that way.

## **2. Dumisani Theological Institute and Bible School (from D.P. Smith)**

Not a lot has changed throughout the year; however there have been a few changes in the faculty members. Wilbert Chipenyu is now the Acting Principal and Lecturer / Facilitator. Wilbert has been involved in teaching virtually all his life and comes from a family of Christian educators. He taught in schools while being a preacher in Zimbabwe and then studied theology and has since also been teaching theology. He is with Timothy Two International and has lead workshops in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and South Africa and taught at theological colleges in Zimbabwe and South Africa. He served as an evangelist for Maritime Missions in Pusan, South Korea and as a pastor for the English Church there. His wife is Perpetua, also a teacher and they have four children. Patrick Diniso, the Acting Vice Principle, ably assists Wilbert. Dr. Jack Whytock continues as a visiting lecturer and governor for DTI, along with his wife Nancy, who oversees the smooth running of the library.

2019 marks a special anniversary for the Dumisani Theological Institute and Bible School. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March they celebrated 40 years of bringing evangelical and reformed theological education to the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Bill and Elizabeth Graham, former staff members, summed things up well: *‘We thank the Lord for our early leaders who had the vision and foresight to form what is today Dumisani Theological Institute and Bible School. We rejoice that for 40 years Dumisani has been educating and training Christian leaders and workers, and our alumni can be found ministering across the Eastern Cape and beyond.*

*Also, we thank the Lord for all who locally, across the country of South Africa, and globally have generously contributed to the advancement of this institution in a variety of ways over these almost four decades. Many have worked together for the common cause of seeing Christian workers go forth prepared for ministries. Dumisani Yehova - to God be the glory, great things he has done’.*

Reflecting on those last lines, as a Synod, our minds should recall the wonderful work achieved in Dumisani through Christ, by Rev Dr Campbell and Ruby Andrews, late of ‘Lilybank,’ Wauchope.

Ministry in modern South Africa, both in the cities and the rural areas calls for patience, compassion, sensitivity, biblical authenticity and Christian integrity, very often in the face of great human need. Just as Christ ministered to human need in all its aspects, so too at Dumisani they seek to educate and equip the men and women whose work for Christ will, under God's blessing, make a significant difference to the lives of men and women and young people of all backgrounds.

## **3. Mukti Missions (from D.P. Smith)**

Mukti Mission has been empowering Indian women and children in India since 1889. The Mission was founded by Pandita Ramabai, a woman described by renowned Indian social reformer D.K. Karve as “one of the greatest daughters of India”. Ramabai was a pioneer in woman's education and social equality, and an outstanding linguist, author and Bible translator. She dedicated her life in service to disadvantaged and marginalised children and women.

Ramabai founded Mukti Mission in Mumbai in 1889 with the opening of the Sharada Sadan, a school of learning for child widows. She then went on to establish a residential community in Pune, which sought to

provide a home and loving community to all women in need. The words of Keith J White in his book “Jesus was her Guru,” reveal something of what it was like in these early years.

*“Soon the place was filled to overflowing with starving child-widows, orphans, victims of famines in Central India, and other needy women. At times, the Mukti Mission provided for as many as 2000. In addition to housing so many women, it had a kindergarten for young children, schools, a hospital, a refuge for ‘fallen women’, 64 cloth-weaving looms, five printing presses, tailoring and handicrafts, a flourmill, an oil press, a laundry, a farm, orchards, and wells”. “The intension was that women should be accepted, nurtured, loved, trained, and equipped to take their place in Indian society as parents, teachers, nurses or Bible women. It was a place of empowerment and transformation – a model Christian community following the teaching of Jesus and the life of the early Christians”.*

The Mission continues to serve disadvantaged women and children from the Pune campus, as well as 18 other locations across 8 states of India. The residential community still provides safe shelter and a loving community to over 500 destitute and abandoned women and children who live in family group homes named after flowers. Today, the Mission campus in Pune also has a hospital, nursing home, dental clinic, two primary schools, a high school, a junior college, a Special Needs School, a Creative Arts School, a nursery for abandoned / unwanted babies, a farm, a dairy and a church. Mukti’s other projects across India include children’s homes and hostels, pre-schools and schools, adult literacy centres and vocational skills training centres. It is estimated the Mission has helped over 100,000 women and children since Ramabai first opened the doors in 1889.

One worthy current project that Synod delegates should encourage their church family’s to support is the ‘Water Catchment and Farming for Mukti’s Future.’ I commend it to you.

Need: With over 2100 women and children living, learning and working at Mukti’s Pune campus each day, the campus’ demands for water and food supplies are considerable. However, Mukti’s wells often run dry and much of its farmland lies fallow due to lack of water and farming resources. Mukti must collect, store and utilise water more effectively, and increase the productivity of its farmland making better use of natural resources.

The Good Harvest Project includes:

- Implementing water harvesting systems
- Building water catchments
- Introducing irrigation systems to fallow fields
- Increasing Mukti’s capacity for organic, sustainable and productive farming

Outcomes:

- More reliable access to clean water for disadvantaged women and children
- More reliable food supply and access to nutritious meals for disadvantaged women and children in India
- Access to food, water and other basic needs enables children to shift their focus away from survival and towards education, skills training and realising the potential within themselves to live a purpose-filled life
- Mukti’s farming staff are trained in sustainable farming practices
- Mukti’s farmland produces better crops
- Mukti itself becomes more sustainable as the ability to provide for itself increases

Please partner with Mukti to help bring the good harvest to Mukti India!

#### **4. Taleem Centre, India** (from D.K. Muldoon)

Following demands from a local religious leader for Mariam to close the **Taleem Centre** she praises the Lord that she was given wisdom and strength to reopen after Easter 2018. Part of that wisdom was to include Hindu children in the school, which she has done. Still, she has to be wise in this ministry. She is thankful for the ongoing help of a villager G and his wife, who are interested in the gospel. She was able to get a new room in which to conduct classes, and hire a new teacher after a faithful worker had to leave for the city. As a young lady, Mariam has to be careful in visiting the village; her brother often goes with her.



**Mariam** has settled into her own teaching job at a school owned and managed by a Hindu man. She writes, *'On 26th January as it was our republic day, the Principal sent a word that I will be giving a speech. I didn't have a choice. I have spoken a couple of times in the Christian community but never in schools. I prepared my speech to the best but was quite nervous to deliver it. I had it written down. I did get a bit nervous but since most of the words were my own I remembered what I have to speak and when I have to look down on the paper. I was only happy that I*

*delivered it without stammering. Little did I know that my words would make such a huge difference most of my colleagues appreciated me for my speech. The Principal said in front of the whole staff that it was excellent. I was happy she liked it. Later the President-the school owner- called me to come to see him. He appreciated me as well. It was really nice to make some difference through my words'.*

Mariam asks us to pray for her sister Shekinah as she completes an MA in mass communication. She has twice been to a mission project in northern Thailand and feels called to return. Shekinah writes as part of her testimony, *'I was able to complete my education and go for working with project video in Thailand via sponsorship from churches. I realize how I wanted to use my life to serving the Lord. Utilizing my talents under Project Video has been a learning experience and I want to be able to continue to do so. I had returned from Thailand 2.5 years ago when funds were not sufficient to stay there. Past years I have sent in prayer to go to Thailand where I was able to utilize my talents for the extension of his kingdom'.*

We pray for Shekinah that the Lord would indeed lead her in making this decision. We have referred her to an Indian mission agency that will offer guidance and pastoral support. She has spoken with her pastor. We in the PCEA hope to offer prayer and financial support if the Lord guides her into missionary service. Mariam also give praise that brother Zachariah has almost completed his engineering studies.

### **5. Dr Dickson, India** (from D.K. Muldoon)

Dickson celebrated 25 years since the Lord called him and his family from south India to north India to minister to the rural poor in the name of Jesus Christ. He came to Allahabad to minister with the Muldoons, a work he continued for some years after they left, before moving to Delhi where, in 2009, he started an Animal Wellness Centre among dairy farmers on the outskirts of this city. Delhi is the fifth largest city in the world with a population slightly higher than the population of Australia.

Dickson assists farmers with animal health matters. In this last year offered a free one-day clinic that attracted many dairy men. He also offers classes for girls and married women in computer literacy, tailoring and handicrafts, thereby helping them to find employment. His Christmas outreach program had to be postponed until 25 January this year because of sickness brought on by the pollution in Delhi.

Dickson is on the committee of the mission called Interserve India, and active in EGF (Evangelical Graduates Fellowship), a student ministry. He has been pleased to see his vision for a network of Christian Vets take shape this year. He was invited to speak at the National Conference of 32 Christian Vets in Chennai in August. He hopes to register an organization called VETNET; he has been writing a VETNET newsletter for some years. The aim is to encourage more Christian vets and agriculturalists to come to the north.

Dickson continued conducting farmer training camps in remote parts of North India. In September he gave training in goat and poultry husbandry at the village of Barhawa- India is a land of over 500,000 villages. In December he conducted training for tribal people in the state of Odisha. He wrote, *'Livestock training for Saurav tribes in south Odisha from 10-15 December 18 went on well. The place is located in a remote*

*place, bit close to Rayaguda. The training was organised in collaboration with EFICOR (Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief). They arranged my stay in a town called Gunupur and we went to the village every day. It was six days training programme. First three days I taught to selected VVAs (Village Volunteer for Animal Health) about prevention of diseases at village level with lot of practical. They learnt with full enthusiasm. Some of them did very well. They need further training for more learning on hands. The next three days I taught the Saurav farmers about livestock management. I taught them few practical things. I could realise that the need is great in the interior. Pray that Lord would raise more Vets to reach out the unreached groups in this great land'.*

In April 2019 Dickson plans to go to the northeastern state of Manipur to conduct pig training, and in the same month is organizing his first North India conference for Christian vets. India has over 300million cows and buffalos and 135 million goats. We rejoice in the opportunity to partner with Dickson in the Lord's work across north India through our prayers and giving.

## **6. Presbyterian Free Church of Central India (J Greensill from P Kumar)**

Despite of all struggles of life and ministry, there are many reasons to rejoice over and praise God. As church, we continue to move ahead with the assurance that the gates of hell will never prevail against the church. She may be opposed and suffer severe hostility yet she continues to triumph over power of darkness. The Great commission is being fulfilled, the gospel is preached and disciples are prepared to make more disciples. This is the reason of our joy. Besides, our church planting work and diploma in theology program, we are also very much engaged in discipleship movement and doctrinal purity of the local churches. In past two years, Lord has brought many foundational and relational changes in our mission work. We have seen personal transformation and witnessing lay people turn into leaders in the church.

Church planting work: We have many stories of God's grace sustaining and leading us. Recently, few churches, with Presbyterian background, in the neighbouring state, Maharashtra, showed their desire to be in union with PFCCI. Our church planting works in Madhya Pradesh continue to grow. In May 2018, the presbytery was able to purchase a land in Kahani for the construction of parsonage and a prayer hall. The work of Kahani cannot be separated from the story of Mr. Fakeer Chand. Fakeer Chand moved to the town in 2015, after 45 years, as the first residential pastor. The presbytery encouraged him to introduce himself as a pastor, not as a social worker, from the very beginning because they did not want to deceive local people by having a different identity at the beginning (social worker), and later changing it to a pastor. This strategy worked out but with some trials. In April 2016, Fakeer Chand was threatened to leave Kahani or bear some extreme physical violence. It was a very difficult time for him, his wife and two little children. The local committee there even were thinking to send him back to Chhapara for six months. The idea was that when the things become normal, he can return and resume the work. However, the leadership of the presbytery had a different opinion. The leadership knew that once Mr. Fakeer Chand withdraws from Kahani it will give the impression to the local community and fundamentalist groups that he was doing something wrong. And also, when he returns it will be more difficult for him to be in Kahani. After, many prayers and counselling Mr. Fakeer Chand decided to stay back for sake of Christ and his vision.

Alongside of the prayer, the presbytery utilized the widespread network of Mission Higher Secondary School of Chhapara to control the situation. The Christian teachers of the school knew that some of the old students of the school are leaders of the same political party which was acting against Fakeer Chand. Based on their relationship with them, they were able to influence and control the violent group in Kahani. By God's grace, within a week the things were in control. Later, after one month, the leader of the violent group requested Fakeer Chand to pray for him. Since then, they are sharing a good social space with each other. The effect of this was that Fakeer Chand was accepted as good, humble, forgiving religious teacher (Pastor) in the region. Through this trial, he has developed real character and witnessed Christ through his personal life.

Through this incident, God also taught us the following: Facing persecution gives you a real opportunity to preach and practice the gospel provided, with Lord's grace, you remain humble, truthful, courageous and forgiving. Maintaining a good and constant relational network with the local leaders of fundamentalist group is quite necessary and often results in help on humanitarian basis. Often, in India, many evangelists and pastors avoid social space with them. In doing so, they reduce the opportunity to know them as persons and portray themselves as religiously superior and strangers to them.

It is also wise to observe that if the context allows, one must enter into the field with the original identity (Christian Religious Guru/Teacher). The benefit of this is that local people are aware of who he really is and, afterwards, as he starts worshipping in his own house or prayer hall, people do not feel deceived, and the relationship remains same despite religious differences. The story of Mr. Fakeer Chand also leads us to the ministry of the Mission schools in Chhapara and Lakhnadon. Despite many financial struggles, the schools continue to serve the community, testifying God's goodness through the preaching and service.

Mission Higher Secondary School Chhapara: This year has been a very eventful one for us. We have made great efforts and by God's grace we have been extremely successful in most of our endeavours. Apart from preparing the children to qualify for purely academic demands, special efforts are being made continuously to enable them to face the challenges of the competitive world. It's a matter of great importance to us that the students who pass out from our portals should carry forward the values they have inherited, excel in whatever they do, and be role models in the society. This academic year, the strength of both of the schools decreased because of many popular government schemes in order to attract their voters as it was the election year, in addition many new schools popping up in our region. However, there are lot to praise God:

Spreading the good news:

As our vision and mission is to glorify God and develop our students in an environment that reflects Christ's love, wisdom and knowledge. This will motivate them intellectually, spiritually, socially and physically. Despite the adverse circumstances, we cannot stop ourselves obeying the Great Command of Jesus Christ, which is our supreme goal. Our evangelist, Mr. Santosh Das, takes this responsibility by taking devotion and bible classes every day. Students happily learn bible stories, songs and pray the Lord's Prayer; some of them also attend the Sunday School class.

Achievements:

1. Academic: We are proud to report that 2017-18 batch of X & XX Std students have brought laurels to the school by their excellent results. We achieved 100% results. This was possible because of the God's grace and efforts by the dedicated staff, the students occupied all the three highest positions in Chhapara.

2. Recognition and award: It was a great achievement of the school that 9 students from class 10th and 8 students from class 12th were awarded by the Chief Minister of State for their outstanding performance in the Board classes and were given one Laptop each. Apart from this, eight students were selected by State Council of Science and Technology for Science tour; our school was single among all the other private schools of the district. 11 students won prizes in various fields of Sports in Jabalpur division, MP State, National and International level and also performed well in the quiz contests in Seoni district level and were personally appreciated by the district magistrate/ Chief Executive. This has certainly increased the value of the school and has motivated the staff of the school to pursue and achieve even a greater goal in the upcoming state board exam.

Digital education: We have incorporated 3 digital visual classrooms for demonstration of the Smart Classes. The school has tied up with Teach-Next, a top Indian company for interactive teaching from Nursery to 12th. The SMART CLASS provides great support through audio-visual approach in addition to the normal chalk and talk method.

Community Involvement: The Mission School in Chhapara is not only contributing in the life of the students but also bringing many differences in the community. Recently, when 44 Indian paramilitary police on their convoy in Indian-administered Kashmir were killed in a bomb-attack by militants, Mission School Chhapara was first in the town that paid homage to the martyrs in the very heart of the busy market centre. A large number of people, elected representatives, press reporters and dignitaries were present. The event was began with a two-minutes collective silence prayer followed by prayer for the Nation, Indian Forces, martyrs and their families and concluded with the National Anthem. This step of Mission School was highly appreciated and drew attention of people in Chhapara.

Helping disadvantaged children: God's love, care and compassion for the less fortunate is not a suggestion but one's Christian duty. We thank God that through the sponsorship scheme, supported by the members of PCEA, the school is able to show the love and kindness of Jesus Christ by supporting many underprivileged children of the school. The scheme is helping many needy children to continue in their studies, free education, school uniform, stationeries and medical help.

Finance: The finance of the schools have been always a big concern for the management. However, this year, the staff of the school really laboured hard to get most of the fees collected. By their sincere efforts, we were able to cut off the fee collection deficit. The management is aiming to provide salary every month to the staff and by God's grace, we have been able to do that. There is still a huge gap to cover, yet the relief is that this year we managed to do well in terms of fee collection and salary disbursement.

Future development: We thank God for answering our prayer. The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (DVN) have agreed to help the school in developing the infrastructure and other required facilities. This will certainly help us to renovate and maintain a 100 year old structure, as well as enhance the reputation and facilities of the school, and attract new admissions.

As we conclude, we are thankful to God for sustaining the ministry of the Church and schools. God, who has sustained this work of service for more than a century, will also guide our footsteps towards His purposes. By faith, we keep moving ahead. We also appreciate your prayers and generosity. You are a vital reason of our progression, and with your help and prayer support we can do better in future.

### **7. Colegio San Andres, Peru** (from J. D. Klazinga)

It is good to be able to continue supporting this school in prayer. We also send them a yearly gift to help provide some financial assistance for students and families who might not otherwise be able to attend the school.

The school's Director, José García, reports, "The building we work in was built 80 years ago, the school is 102 years old. We are investing in expensive repairs and spare parts, in order to guarantee the safety of parents and children. We are praying for projects that help us finance the construction of a new school, by stages, modern that continue to provide Christian education and continue to be a model in our Peruvian society that suffers corruption, violence, etc. A project is to acquire a property next to the school... We pray for funds. Another project is to build a new auditorium. Former students in the US offer to create a foundation and look for donors for this project.

"Peruvian laws are being unfair to private schools, there is a 50 to 60% delinquency due to those laws that protect parents and do not allow schools to develop.

"We have started the school year with 756 children. Thank God! There will be many more! May the presence of God guide us to disciple them. We live in a climate of tranquillity, of harmony and we repeat ourselves: We work with joy for the Lord. "We give thanks for your prayers for us. Last year there was healing in sick children and teachers, children and parents had the wonderful experience of receiving Jesus as saviour of their lives. Hallelujah!"

To learn more about the school, access their Wikipedia page at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colegio\\_San\\_Andrés](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colegio_San_Andrés). If you can read Spanish, you can access their webpage at: <http://www.sanandres.edu.pe/> Even if you can't read Spanish, there are some lovely pictures there.

### **8. Annie Soper School, Peru** (from J. D. Klazinga)

We give thanks for the ongoing opportunity to support the work of the Annie Soper School in Moyobamba, Peru, primarily in prayer, but also by offering once a year a modest contribution for the purpose of helping to fund scholarships for needy students.

Our contact with Annie Soper, Mrs. Pilar Urquieta, continues to be faithful in providing us with prayer requests for inclusion in our bi-monthly Mission Prayer Notes Newsletter. She has been mostly forwarding requests from the school Director Mrs. Mariquita Chumbe. We are very thankful for both of these godly women and their involvement in the school community.

They continue to strive to maintain a Christian approach to education in the midst of a secular society, dealing with many of the same pressures facing us in Australia and in other Western countries. For instance, in a recent email, Pilar wrote, "We are concerned about a new law that regulates the private schools. It ... promotes the 'gender ideology' and does not promote the parents' participation in the education." To access their Facebook page, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/colegioanniesoper/>

## **9. Christian Witness to Israel (from Rhoda Ball)**

The Lord has been at work through CWI for over 175 years. Rev. Joseph Steinberg was appointed CEO in 2014. Last year Joseph visited Australia in May, meeting with the Council as well as speaking in various churches and Bible Colleges. Some PCEA members were able to hear him speak in both Sydney and Melbourne. A report of his visit appeared in the July 2018 Presbyterian Banner. Since his visit I have heard nothing from the Australian Council; it doesn't appear to communicate or connect with their supporters. The lack of response has been frustrating and disappointing. The CEO is planning a return visit in May, but we have no more information available at the moment. Stephen and Lana Holmes (Melbourne) resigned last year; so, there are currently no CWI Australian missionaries.

I have been culling prayer points for the Mission Prayer Notes from the CWI Herald magazine and the UK 'Praying Always'. An electronic copy of these can be obtained upon request from: [info@cw.org.uk](mailto:info@cw.org.uk). These are produced bi-monthly and provide news and encouraging testimonies from the workers on the field. I would encourage ministers and elders to request a copy so as to be informed and specific in praying for CWI in public worship and midweek meetings. Pray specifically for the raising up of evangelists to work among the Jewish people in Australia, and the Australian Council will be more active and effective. The Gentile church must not forget its obligation to bring the Gospel back to the Jewish people.

### **REPORT FROM THE ICRC MISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETING 2018, Willow Grove, PA.**

The convener was privileged to attend this three-day meeting in September 2018 and thanks the PCEA Synod for its financial support. It was a unique opportunity to learn about the mission work of sister churches and to report on PCEA mission work. With representatives from 20 Reformed churches in attendance, opportunity was taken for the sharing of information and possible cooperation on certain mission fields- e.g. India. I was interested to learn about Reformed Presbyterian churches in Kenya, Uganda and Sudan. A detailed report will be presented verbally because much of the work is in sensitive countries.

### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCES**

- 1.** The Synod gives thanks to the Lord for the opportunity and privilege to be involved in the work of missions at home and abroad, both in giving, in praying and being directly involved during this past year.
- 2.** Synod thanks Rev Klazinga for editing the bi-monthly prayer notes and encourages congregations to use these notes
- 3.** That the bequest proforma for the Missions Relief Fund, approved by Synod 2018, be included in the PCEA Handbook of Practice and Procedure
- 4.** That Synod adopt the Missions Committee Budget 2019-20 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for this period.

## CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE

G. D. Ball (Convener 2017), D.K. Muldoon, D. Kerridge (website), R.S Ward (Banner) and T.W. Yoa.

***We are in the 'post-Pell era'***. The conviction of Cardinal George Pell on child sex abuse charges sent shock waves through the Roman Catholic community. His conviction was also a lightning rod for the community to express its anger, contempt and disgust toward all organised religion. As far as the public is concerned all churches are tarred with the same brush. Their cynicism and distrust is understandable. This is the hostile environment in which we now live, and are called to witness in. Changing times. Difficult days. However, these days may be more like the conditions the New Testament Christians faced in the book of Acts. They too were treated with suspicion and contempt. But it didn't muzzle or intimidate them. They refused to be silenced (Acts 5: 29). They challenge us. We must not be silent either. As the four lepers said, 'We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news and we remain silent' (2 Kings 7: 9). We must not fear. We too have good news. The Lord still reigns. He is still able and willing to save all who call upon Him. Peter exhorts his original readers who were enduring persecution, 'Do not fear what they fear. In your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect' (1 Peter 3: 15).

If we are to be authentic and credible witnesses we must be different. We must reverence the Lord in our hearts. We must seek to live godly lives. We must demonstrate humility. We must not fear the things the world fears – whether that be illness, cancer, ageing, death, terrorism, global warming, or fears of a stock market crash. We may not be immune from these things but the Bible counsels us how we can face such things with hope and courage. When we live such lives, it will provoke questions and enquiries that we must answer in a gentle and respectful way. There is no place for arrogance or rudeness.

A Puritan prayer puts it aptly: '*Keep me from high thoughts of myself or my work, for I am nothing but sin and weakness; in me no good dwells, and my best works are but sin. Humble me to the dust before thee. Root and tear out the poisonous weed of self-righteousness and show me my utter nothingness . . . Grant me to rest on thy power and faithfulness, and to know that there are two things worth living for: to further thy cause in the world, and to do good to the souls and bodies of men. This is my ministry, my life, my prayer, my end. Grant me grace that I shall not fail'* (Valley of Vision. Page 188).

We must also examine ourselves as a church before a watching and critical world. As far as the world is concerned the church has reached its expiry date. But the church remains the bride of Christ. The task of the church remains the same: to worship the Lord (1 Peter 2: 9); to gather for mutual encouragement (Heb. 10: 23-25); to take the gospel to those beyond its bounds (Matt. 28: 18-20); and to exercise a ministry of compassion to those in need (Acts 6: 1-6). The church's source of strength remains the same. 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth' (Ps. 124: 8). We must not be discouraged or distracted. Like Nehemiah we can say to our detractors, 'I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?' (Neh. 6: 3).

It's glaringly obvious that the Roman Catholic system needs reform, though a 'Reformation' would be better still! Man can reform, but only the Lord can bring a 'Reformation'. One practical lesson from the George Pell saga is surely the importance of having a comprehensive (and comprehensible) 'safe church' policy.

***Ruddock Report on Religious Freedom***: We anticipated having a report on the Government's response to the Ruddock Report but because of the Parliamentary situation with the government in a minority the matter has been parked. The outcome will probably depend on who wins the election in May. It remains a matter of grave concern.

***Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)***. It's a sad fact that reports of domestic and family violence have increased in all states over the past ten years. It's also believed that there are many more cases that go unreported for various reasons. DFV can take many forms including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and financial abuse. DFV must be condemned in all its forms. It's particularly reprehensible when the Bible is used to try to justify violence, male domination and chauvinism. The Bible's teaching is very clear. 'Husbands love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her' (Eph. 5: 25). 'Husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them' (Col. 3: 19). 'Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner' (1 Peter 3: 7). Likewise, wives are required to, 'submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord' (Col. 3: 18). It's

important to note that male leadership is to be patterned on the example of Jesus servant leadership. Therefore, any attempt to twist the Biblical teaching to support the idea that a male is permitted to rule by force or intimidation is a gross abuse of Scripture. Nowhere in Scripture is a husband told to force his wife to submit, and nowhere is a wife told to cajole her husband to lead. Domestic and family violence is therefore repugnant to God, rejected by Scripture, and the polar opposite of the biblical model of sacrificial love and service.

**Abortion:** The home is not a safe place. Neither is the womb. And it's just got a lot more dangerous since Federal Labour announced that if elected in May they will provide free abortions in all public hospitals across the country (and build an abortion clinic in Tasmania). It's estimated that there are about 80,000 abortions per year in Australia and that one quarter to one third of Australian women will choose to terminate a pregnancy at some point in their lives. These figures can only rise if Labour has its way. NSW is the only state at present where abortion is not permitted under ordinary circumstances. But if Labour is elected the NSW Government will be pressurised to legalise abortion under threat of losing their Commonwealth funding. QLD passed a law in October last year permitting abortion up to 22 weeks. Victoria has the most liberal abortion laws; it's legal up to 24 weeks; and legal thereafter upon the approval of two doctors.

**Church:** When is a crisis a crisis? We don't want to cry 'wolf', but as we look at our church we can safely predict that the next five years will bring certain changes. We are all ageing. There will be retirements in the ministerial ranks and some of our retired ministers and elders will be no longer active. Many of our older saints will be gone. Who is going to replace them? We haven't been good at reproducing. And we haven't been good at producing elders and pastors. Where are they to come from? Paul reminds us that leaders are ultimately God's gift to the church (Eph. 4: 11-12). We need to make it an earnest matter of prayer that the Lord would gift us with suitable ministers and elders. Rev. Jim Klazinga has done a great job encouraging us to pray by sending out a daily prayer request. One recent text was, 'pray that the participants in our congregations may be given wisdom and strength to make use of opportunities to invite family, friends, colleagues and others to church'. While visitors do occasionally drop into our services, it is much more effective when we invite them.

**Psalms:** It's encouraging to see evidence here and there of an emerging interest in singing the Psalms. Could it be that we who have never known any other song book take it for granted, while others with no such tradition behind them are excited by what they are discovering in the Psalms? One recent article entitled, 'Five Reasons Pastors Should Not Allow the Psalms to be Sung in Church,' illustrates the point. The writer (Baptist pastor, Chris Hume) says several pastors in recent days have made the huge 'mistake' of singing the Psalms in church. He goes on to state (satirically) that singing the Psalms will result in making people feel uncomfortable (and upset their 'worship experience'). It will offend people (by correcting their view of God). It will challenge to Pastor to adjust his message (he will have to teach the sovereignty of God and the justice of God). The pastor will have to deal with difficult aspects of the Christian life (such as dealing with the Law of God; because God's Law has fallen on tough times in our antinomian age he will have to address how we are to love God's Law and obey it). Finally, if you sing Psalms you will be playing a part in the downfall of modern worship music (if God didn't want us to use modern songs, He would have inspired a songbook for the church!). It's a thoughtful piece of writing. See [www.reformedhope.com](http://www.reformedhope.com)

It's a pity we can't have a PCEA Psalter; one that can bring us together in harmony (pun intended). The 'Sing Psalms' published by the Free Church of Scotland is an excellent translation, but the tunes are unfamiliar with many difficult metres. It's important that the Psalter we use, if it is to be used at home and appeal to visitors in public worship, should be user friendly and include tunes that are familiar and uncomplicated. Perhaps the time has come to consider an update of the 'Complete Book of Psalms for Singing' (Melbourne 1991). It has served a number of congregations well for many years now. A revision might include incorporating (with permission of course) some of the best psalms and tunes from other available psalters and sources, as well as enlisting help from suitably gifted people in the church. Rev. Dr. R.S. Ward holds the copyright, and nothing could be achieved without his cooperation and support. He has indicated he is very willing to co-operate in such a project.

**The Presbyterian Banner:** We are thankful for the industry and willingness of Rev. Dr. R. S. Ward who as editor has continued to produce the Banner this past year. We share his disappointment that not more participate in providing church news.

## **Proposed Deliverances: -**

1. Synod acknowledges the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ over the nations and the obligation this places upon leaders and others to acknowledge and serve Him. 'Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way' (Psalm 2: 10-12).
2. Synod expresses its concern over ongoing threats to our religious liberty. We urge government to ensure that churches, schools, colleges, and all other religious institutions be allowed to operate according to their particular ethos. 'Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people' (Prov. 14: 34).
3. Synod encourages every member to pray for our church and nation. The biblical principles stated in 2 Chron. 7: 14 are still relevant. 'If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land'. Prayer and repentance must begin with the people of God.
4. Synod thank Rev. J. Klazinga for preparing daily prayer texts which assist us to pray for various ministries in the church.
5. Synod disowns and condemns all forms of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV). It is particularly repugnant when Scripture is used to defend DFV. Any attempt to twist the Biblical teaching to support the idea that a male is permitted to rule by force or intimidation is a gross abuse of the Bible. Male leadership is to be patterned on the example of Jesus servant leadership. Nowhere in Scripture is a husband told to force his wife to submit, and nowhere is a wife told to cajole her husband to lead. DFV is repugnant to God, rejected by Scripture and the polar opposite of the biblical model of sacrificial love and service.
6. Synod affirms that human life is sacred from the womb, and therefore condemns the wanton or arbitrary destruction of any human being at any stage of its development from the point of conception to the point of death. The only possible grounds for an induced abortion is when the life of the mother-to-be is genuinely threatened by the continuation of the pregnancy. The Bible teaches that God created human beings in His image (Gen. 1: 26-27). In Exodus 20: 13 the Lord says in the sixth commandment, 'You shall not murder'. Little ones in the womb are defenceless human beings made in the image of God who have feelings (Luke 1: 41-44). Therefore, God forbids the destruction of human life in the womb.  
Nevertheless, Synod encourages its members to show Christian compassion and offer support to those experiencing unwanted pregnancies as well as those who have undergone abortions.
7. Synod affirm the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith concerning the parts of worship namely, 'The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience to God, with understanding, faith and reverence; singing of Psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God. Besides religious oaths and vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions which are in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner' (21: 5).
8. Synod agrees that it would be desirable if all our congregations sang from the same Psalter. Toward that end Synod requests Rev. Dr. R. S. Ward to consider producing a revised and updated edition of 'the Complete Book of Psalms for Singing' involving the help of suitably gifted people.
9. Synod records its thanks to the editor of the Presbyterian Banner, Rev. Dr. R. S. Ward, for his industry in producing the magazine over the past year. Synod commends this ministry to the prayers of the church.

# MEDIA COMMITTEE

## THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER REPORT

Rev Dr Rowland Ward

I provide the first report since commencing acting as Editor with the March 2018 issue.

### Subscriptions

The number of subscriptions appears relatively steady with about 100 print copies, most of these bulk. The copies placed on the pcea website appear to receive a similar number of hits as before and previous experience shows the longer they are on the website the more downloads occur, often exceeding 1,000 after 5 or 6 years.

### Production

For the March issue we switched printer from Minuteman Press in Narre Warren to Minuteman Press Heathmont saving \$52.25 a 16 page issue. But I discovered the magazines weighed over the postal limit being paid so reduced the size to 12 pages (which was usual prior to Mr Bajema's editorship) although the layout adopted did not reduce the content all that severely. This was a further saving of \$36.11 an issue. Hence, the reduction of subscription price in 2019.

I have not purchased special software but used MS Word on my MacBook. This does restrict layout somewhat but given a future editor may have different software and greater ability than I, it seemed the prudent course.

Compared to years ago the production effort is easy; organising the mail out takes about an hour.

### Contributions

Several congregations (eg. Ulverstone) regularly supply news items. Some never do. Few ministers provide material but many thanks to those who do. The magazine has the potential to be a positive and unifying force but does not realise its full potential because of what one might perceive as apathy in our congregations.

### The future

Church magazines are something of a dying breed. AP (Australia Presbyterian) ceased last year although it should be noted that most of the constituent state churches of the PCA have their own publication. With our older demographic we have to reckon with a continuing need for hardcopies, although this will continue to decline. On the other hand, if there was the concerted, enthusiastic effort that is desirable, the magazine could have a significant role in evangelism and outreach, even if reduced to a quarterly and ultimately confined to electronic media. Assuming Synod has allowed time for discussion of revitalisation and outreach it is suggested that we could consider a 24 page full colour quarterly magazine in modern format inviting like-minded churches to contribute news and items to its columns.

### Finances

Opening balance 1/1/2018	\$1,029.61	less prepayments \$460.00	plus subs owed \$70	paid in 2018=	\$639.61
2018 Subs	3,625.00				
Interest net of fees	2.89				
					3,627.89
Less:					
Printing	1,926.81				
Postage	764.00				
Sundries	39.00				<u>2,729.81</u>
Surplus on year					898.08
plus accumulated surplus 1/1/18					639.61
plus prepayments 31/12/18					<u>455.00</u>
Funds at bank 31/12/2018					1,992.69

## WEBSITE REPORT

The internet is always changing and new technologies are developing fast. Even the notion of having a website is becoming somewhat old-fashioned as the predominance of people using mobile technology rather than desktops demands different forms of delivery and presentation for information. The use of social media is vast and also a sign of the decline in traditional webpages as the face of organisations. Our website is still proving useful and is used regularly (as statistics and download records below show), but it may be that other ways of delivering content may be the way to proceed in future.

Most of our visitors are from Australia, the United States, with Great Britain and Kenya, being the next most frequent for this year.

	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
2014	21,536	43,402 (2.01/visitor)	419,072 (9.65 pages/visit)	791,629	59.19 GB (1,430.08 KB/visit)
2015	14,516	26,239 (1.8/visitor)	600,414 (22.88 pages/visit)	921,609	46.66 GB (1,864.5 KB/visit)
2016	14,921	27,320 (1.83/visitor)	477,158 (17.46 pages/Visit)	741,281	28.61 GB (1097.97 KB/visit)
2017	22,625	45,780 (2.02 visits/visitor)	640,461 (13.98 pages/visit)	987,776	36.63 GB (838.99 KB/visit)
2018	19,865	36,277 (1.82 visits/visitor)	212,890 (5.86 Pages/visit)	526,581	29.29

The table above shows trends over the last five years. This year there has been a downturn in visits from 2017 levels, but not below the previous two years. The PCEA website has had a renovation, with a new front page and remodeling of some sections at the end of 2018. It may have been that there were some issues with style and presentation through most of 2017 that caused a downturn in interest or, as is generally suggested by those who know web design, that a general lack of new and interesting content has seen people pass us by. Most attention from visitors is paid to the Congregations, Downloads (mostly *Banner* and archives), and News and Views pages.

Operating on a separate and secured website, the MDSS (Missions Donations and Sponsorship Scheme) is now in its fourth year of operation on the web. Like many sponsorship and charitable schemes, we are trying to establish a simple, single \$20/month donation which a user can cancel at any time for themselves rather than previous annual/quarterly and monthly options that needed renewals at various times in the year (manually checked and followed up). This simplifies administration. We do need continued awareness of the scheme amongst people in the congregations. Amelia O'Dell was the coordinator and "Ambassador" for the church in 2018 but had to give up that role at the beginning of this year due to work commitments. We are hopeful that Mr Peter Carswell may take on the role. We have just received our first international sponsor from Scotland, seamlessly using the MDSS, and we hope we can expand our reach from there.

Once again, the PCEA Community pages have been relatively unused, however there has been some encouragement from Mr Cameron Hamilton in the new year. He may yet take on a role as a moderator/administrator of this section, and he is seeking now to use the resource as part of his role on the Youth and Fellowship Committee to encourage communication. We encourage people to use the arena to share and discuss church matters, fellowship and encourage one another online. We cannot really compete with Facebook in this, but it is still the intention to provide a more "sanctified" space, unfettered by secularist strictures on expression.

The draft Training of Ministry Committee's Elder's Course continues from last year to have a "placeholder" presence on the website under the "Elders" Menu at a subdomain <http://elders.pcea.org.au/> (It is editable as a

Wiki by members of the Training of Ministry Committee and authorised persons, a facility that will be useful for continued development of the course into future editions). This sub-domain is in need of collaborative effort to develop a useful resource for Elders and prospective office-bearers in the church, as well as being a resource for the wider Reformed church.

The Historical Magazine Archive averages about 350 downloads per publication (*The Free Church Quarterly Vol. 7 1909-1913* is still the most downloaded, grossing 881 downloads since it was uploaded 8/4/14). *The Presbyterian Banner* issues for February and March, 2018 received the most downloads for the year at 367 and 359 respectively (The most downloaded *Banner* was the March 2014 issue, 1857 downloads). The 2017 Handbook has been downloaded 1911 times, Synod Minutes; 1158 times (Synod 2013), most Minutes around 500 times, whereas Synod Reports have only been downloaded around 10 times each. Other publications available to download: *Understanding Islam* by Rev.Dr R.Ward, 1133 downloads. *The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (1846-2013)*, R. Ward, 1203 downloads. *Short Statements on Issues of Significance* by Church and Nation Committee, 725 pdf downloads.

Regular contributions have been received from Rev. Andres Miranda, and thanks go to him for keeping content alive on the site. He is able to access and write his posts directly. Please talk to him about the ease with which this can be done. All office-bearers have such access – please use it! We again appeal for content from congregations. A website reflects the interests and enthusiasm of those it represents. Please be represented through the website, not just with contact details for your congregation, but with “likes” for Andres’ articles, messages to Cameron and others, and interaction using the social media portion of the site. To be a truly useful gateway and introduction to the denomination we need your help.

#### Proposed Deliverances

1. That the Synod commend the PCEA website to delegates and congregations and they be encouraged to participate in the life of the church online by active registration, collaboration and comment.

## ARCHIVIST REPORT

Rev Dr Rowland Ward

The patient work of Robert Hingston (deacon, Ulverstone) in scanning magazines supplied from the archive has continued so that since last Synod the church magazines from 1933 to 1944 have been scanned and sent to the Webmaster. This means that almost all the PCEA/FPCV/FPSA magazines since 1846 are on line, all but the early ones being searchable. The exceptions are *The Standard* (1859-61), (edited by Peter MacPherson 1859-61), copy in State Library of Victoria, the broadsheet weekly *The Witness* edited by the Rev. George Sutherland 1872-84 (but three bound volumes covering 1877-81 were lodged with the Ferguson Library in Sydney in 2018 on permanent loan). A complete run (1881-93) of *The Free Churchman*, issued by the ‘Reconstituted Synod’ is held in the PCEA Archive.

It’s encouraging to note that many of the files have been downloaded 300 or 400 times and some over 700 times. Our thanks again is recorded for our brother in Ulverstone and his faithful work.

I have donated a copy of my *Australian Presbyterians: Origins, Conflicts and Progress 1803-2018* to the Archives. While covering chiefly the theological and constitutional history of the PCAu, it contains a rather full bibliography (pages 358-369) which will be useful to researchers.

Other material in the archive relates to congregations, presbyteries and ministers of the church including publications, past committee records and the like. I am happy to receive additional relevant material for safekeeping in the Knox building.

# **SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE**

R Tso (Convener 2016), Messrs P. Smith, J Audet, D Ramsay

## **A: SUPERANNUATION**

### **1. Church Contributions to Superannuation**

#### *1.1 Superannuation Levy on congregations (current rates)*

- Self-supporting congregations: 16%
- Aid-receiving congregations: 9%
- Vacant congregations: 3%

#### *1.2 Superannuation Support Fund & Superannuation Levy Account*

a. **The Superannuation Support Fund (SSF) Capital Account** balance as at 31/12/18 was \$206,153 This was a decrease of \$9,705. The fund arises from specific legacies and forfeited benefits under earlier no longer existing provisions. The intention of the fund is to support the levy account from time to time.

**The SSF Working Account** balance as at 31/12/18 was \$14,634 after providing \$3,605 for Rev TI Leggott's superannuation contributions.

b. **The Superannuation Levy Account** balance as at 31/12/18 was \$10,705 after paying contributions totalling \$72,902 to ministers' nominated superannuation funds.

### **2. Contributions to ministers' Superannuation accounts**

#### *2.1 Contribution Rates*

- Inducted ministers (up to 70 years of age):16%
- Inducted ministers (from age 70):9.5%

### **3. Superannuation overview**

#### *3.1 Default Fund*

All but two of our members have chosen HESTA, our default fund, for their contributions. The default for HESTA is their Core Pool Fund.

#### *3.2 Performance*

The net return on HESTA Core Pool Fund for twelve months ending 30/6/18 was 10.55%. The historical performance as at 30/6/18 for the past 5 years was 9.5%.

## **B. LONG SERVICE LEAVE/ANNUAL LEAVE**

We remind Synod members of the provision by Synod 2003 of an extra week of annual leave (5 weeks in all), which must be taken, or the provision of LSL at a week a year at the local level up to age 70. It is recommended that annual leave not to be accumulated beyond two years.

## **C. COMMITTEE**

The Committee anticipates a review of some of the Superannuation policies in the coming year.

Proposed deliverance

1. Synod request Sessions and Deacons' Courts to keep a close eye on ministers' leave entitlements to ensure ministers do not suffer burn out through failure to take it, and that Presbyteries keep this in mind in the annual examination of records to ensure outstanding entitlement is minuted at least once a year.

# FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Incorporating General Treasurer's Report)

Committee members: AH Steel (Convener), T Buck, DE Kerr, DJ Ramsay, DP Smith (General Treasurer)

Business attended to by the committee included:

## **1. Ministers' Minimum Stipend**

### **Level and Basis of Review of Minimum Stipend –**

After taking into account rates paid by other Presbyterian churches in NSW and Victoria, the *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the *Consumer Price Index (CPI)* the committee recommends the current level (\$1,079 per week) and basis of review of the minimum stipend be continued.

## **2. Stipend Relief**

A request was received from Brisbane Deacons' Court via petition to Northern Presbytery for Stipend Relief "in the amount of \$20,000 for the current year on a needs basis". The Presbytery advised Deacons' Courts within the Presbytery would be notified of the need and be requested to apportion funds to aid Brisbane as they are able in this Synodical year (per Handbook 3.17.d).

As at 31/12/18 the balance of *Synod Stipend Relief Fund* was \$9,269, with a further \$5,000 specifically nominated for Brisbane. Since 31/12/18 Brisbane has drawn the \$5,000 bringing their total drawings since last Synod to \$10,000. It is therefore recommended that all applications made for stipend relief be:

- Strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
- Submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1<sup>st</sup> January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
- Subject to the availability of funds.

## **3. The Capital Assistance Fund**

As at 31/12/18 assets totalled \$847,326, which was an increase of \$18,029 (2.1%) on 2017. The increase resulted from interest received, share dividends and revaluations and the annual \$50 rent from St Georges Deacons' Court.

### **Gifts/Loans –**

A request was received from Brisbane Deacons' Court via petition to Northern Presbytery "to make money from the capital assistance fund available to the Brisbane congregation for the purchase of a suitable manse up to the value of \$750,000, with monies raised and/or set aside for the purchase going back into the fund, the balance being gifted, and any actual purchase being subject to approval of the congregation and Northern Presbytery; or to do otherwise for this purpose, as it in its wisdom may see fit."

In essence this constitutes a request to Synod to approve in Principle the gifting of up to approximately \$466,000 and provision of a short-term interest free loan of \$200,000 if required.

Refer to Appendix "A" for full details and recommendations which are made solely on the financial viability of the proposal and do not take into account the findings of Synod 2016 and 2018 regarding further research required as to determine a more specific plan for the extension of the Lord's work in the Brisbane area, to particularly consider the sale of the present church property in such plans so as to reduce their need for finance assistance in providing a manse and a suitable place of worship. No evidence was included in the overture of such having been carried out.

## **4. General Treasurer's Report to Synod/ Estimates (Major Working Funds Receipts/Payments)**

At the time of writing this report estimates for the major working funds to 31/12/19 were not to hand. This budget will be supplied at Synod.

**PROPOSED DELIVERANCES**

1. We record our thanks to God for sufficiency in the provision of the ministry for another year.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2019/2020 be made on 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> July in line with the movement in the *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any six-monthly review period, no adjustment be made.
3. Stipend Assistance of up to \$20,000 for 2018/2019 be granted to Brisbane Deacons' Court as follows:
  - Strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
  - Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1<sup>st</sup> January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
  - Be subject to the availability of funds.
- 4.a Synod approval in Principle to gift to the Brisbane Congregation up to \$466,000 from the *Synod Capital Assistance Fund* to assist in the purchase of a suitable manse for the Congregation.
- b. In addition, Synod approve in Principle an interest free Loan of \$200,000 from the *Synod Capital Assistance Fund* if required to complete the purchase prior to receipt of a donation for like amount from the Northern Rivers Congregation.

Subject to –

1. Approval being granted by the Brisbane Session, Congregation and Northern Presbytery when a suitable property at a purchase price no greater than \$750,000 is found.
2. If an interest free loan of \$200,000 is required prior to receipt of a donation for this amount from Northern Rivers Congregation, an extract minute from Northern Presbytery is to be forwarded to the Synod Treasurer stating all approvals have been obtained viz. Synod for sale of Lismore Church property, Northern Rivers Deacons' Court/Session have agreed to make the donation of \$200,000 and Brisbane Deacons' Court/Session and Congregation agreed to take up the loan from Synod.

.....

# FINANCE COMMITTEE

## APPENDIX “A”

### Request for Financial Assistance – Brisbane Deacons’ Court

#### **Background**

In 2016 Brisbane Session overtured Northern Presbytery/Synod to borrow in the order of \$500,000 towards the purchase of a manse.

Synod resolved:

“That, having considered the overture from Brisbane Session requesting approval in principle to borrow in the order of \$500,000 from the Capital Assistance Fund resolves the prayer of the overture be not granted.

Synod further resolved that the Session and Deacons’ Court further research and determine a more specific plan for the extension of the Lord’s work in the Brisbane area, bearing in mind that there is existing legislation in the church [Handbook, Capital Assistance Fund point 6] for loan applications to be submitted for consideration between annual Synods.”

In 2018 Brisbane Deacons’ Court petitioned Northern Presbytery/Synod to:

“To request Synod to provide sufficient funds to the Brisbane Congregation to enable it to purchase a suitable manse or to do otherwise as they may deem fit.”

Northern Presbytery resolved “to forward the request of the Brisbane Deacons’ Court to Synod (Finance Committee) seeking finance to purchase a Manse or Church and Manse complex up to the value of \$700,000.” Northern Presbytery expanded the Deacons’ Court petition by adding “or church and manse complex up to the value of \$700,000.”

Synod resolved:

“The prayer of the Petition of Brisbane Deacons’ Court for financial assistance be not granted. Refer to Appendix “A” for the Committee’s assessment of the request and recommendations.” (Mins 18.42) ie.

“Recommendations –

That the prayer of the Petition be not granted.

That further research be undertaken to establish a more viable proposition for the extension of the Lord’s work in the Brisbane area.

That Synod encourage the Session and Deacons’ Court to particularly consider the sale of the present church property in such plans so as to reduce their need for finance assistance in providing a manse and a suitable place of worship.

That should financial assistance be needed when an actual proposition is in place there is existing legislation in the church [Handbook, Capital Assistance Fund point 6] for applications to be submitted for consideration between annual Synods.”

#### **Present request**

“The Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to make money from the capital assistance fund available to the Brisbane congregation for the purchase of a suitable manse up to the value of \$750,000, with monies raised and/or set aside for the purchase going back into the fund, the balance being gifted, and any actual purchase being subject to approval of the congregation and Northern Presbytery; or to do otherwise for this purpose, as it in its wisdom may see fit.

## Proposal

To purchase a manse property:		
Purchase Price (value of)		\$750,000
Transfer Duty/Fee		19,600
Legals etc. say		2,600
		-----
		\$772,200
Less:		
Funds on hand/Net proceeds sale previous manse in 1990's	106,200	
Gifted by Northern Rivers Congregation (Part proceeds sale of Lismore church property)	200,000	
Church-wide appeal for funds?		306,200 ?
		-----
Amount Required – LESS Funds received from Church-wide Appeal		\$466,000 ?
		=====

## Funding

\$466,000 is requested from the Synod *Capital Assistance Fund* LESS donations received from Church-wide appeal.

Should the proposed Manse property purchase occur prior to the sale of the Lismore Church property then a loan of \$200,000 is also sought from the Synod *Capital Assistance Fund* in addition to the possible \$466,000. This loan to be repaid upon settlement of a sale of the Lismore church property.

## Security –

If \$200,000 loan taken up - Unsecured but Terms and Conditions to be accepted by extract minute of Deacons' Court.

## Interest -

If \$200,000 loan taken up -Interest free.

## Commentary –

### Background

Two previous requests have been made to Synod (2016 and 2018) and both were declined for reasons quoted above. The current one differs in that a generous gift of \$200,000 is promised by Northern Rivers Congregation towards the proposal.

### Finance Committee's Comments/Recommendation to Synod

It is noted:

1. There is no evidence that the Petition of the Deacons' Court is in accordance with the judgment and appointment of the Session (Handbook 3.1)
2. There is no reference in the Overture indicating a more specific plan for the extension of the Lord's work in the Brisbane area has been carried out since Synod's resolution (Minutes 16.51 and 18.42). This includes Northern Presbytery's desire that wider research was applicable by including " or church and manse complex" when transmitting the 2018 Petition.
3. Northern Rivers Congregation "have indicated they intend to gift \$200,000 from the proposed sale of the Lismore church property", however, no timing, approvals etc are included in the Overture.
4. The Deacons' Court "would be likely to meet the ongoing costs of the congregation if rent for the manse was not required" and thus become self-supporting. The 2018 Financial Statement indicates \$27,820 is listed under *Minister's Expense* for "accommodation".
5. Stipend Relief from Synod of up to \$20,000 on a needs basis, has been sought for the 2019/2020 Synodical year.
6. It has come to the Convener's attention whilst drafting this report that a church-wide appeal has been

made through Presbyteries and “The Presbyterian Banner” for funds to assist in a purchase. This will affect the figures quoted herein for assistance required from Synod.

**Viability –**

Given contributions by Brisbane and Northern Rivers Congregations, excluding funds raised by the Church-wide appeal to the proposed purchase amount to approximately 40% of the proposed purchase price and once finalized the congregation should be self-supporting, it is considered the proposal is viable.

**Synod Funds Available –**

The Synod *Capital Assistance Fund* has a balance of \$847,326 (31/12/18) of which \$636,863 came from the net proceeds of the sale of the church complex at Armidale after returning \$50,000 to the Synod General Fund. The object of the fund is to provide a source of finance for capital expenditure in the work of the church. It can be applied in making available loans or gifts for such capital expenditure as may from time to time be approved by the Synod. Funds are therefore available to gift up to \$466,000 and lend \$200,000 if necessary.

**Recommendations -**

Our recommendations are made solely on the financial viability of the proposal and do not take into account the findings of Synod 2016 and 2018 regarding further research required as to determine a more specific plan for the extension of the Lord’s work in the Brisbane area, to particularly consider the sale of the present church property in such plans so as to reduce their need for finance assistance in providing a manse and a suitable place of worship. No evidence was included in the overture of such having been carried out as noted in *Comments (2)* above.

We recommend the prayer of the Overture be granted in the following terms.

- a. Synod approval in Principle to gift to the Brisbane Congregation up to \$466,000 from the *Synod Capital Assistance Fund* to assist in the purchase of a suitable manse for the Congregation.
- b. In addition, Synod approve in Principle an interest free Loan of \$200,000 from the *Synod Capital Assistance Fund* if required to complete the purchase prior to receipt of a donation for like amount from the Northern Rivers Congregation.

Subject to –

- 3. Approval being granted by the Brisbane Session, Congregation and Northern Presbytery when a suitable property at a purchase price no greater than \$750,000 is found.
- 4. If an interest free loan of \$200,000 is required prior to receipt of a donation for this amount from Northern Rivers Congregation, an extract minute from Northern Presbytery is to be forwarded to the Synod Treasurer stating all approvals have been obtained viz. Synod for sale of Lismore Church property, Northern Rivers Deacons’ Court/Session have agreed to make the donation of \$200,000 and Brisbane Deacons’ Court/Session and Congregation agreed to take up the loan from Synod.

.....

**NSW TRUST CORPORATION**  
**'THE TRUSTEES OF THE SYNOD OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA'**

Members: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer

**Bequests**

No new bequests were received by Synod during 2018.

**Glenridding Cemetery**

There has been no progress with this matter. The Clerk communicated with the UCA representative in March 2018 but it has proved difficult locating the responsible contact for any action. The Clerk will take this up again after Synod.

**Deed Box**

The Locked Deed Box of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia is lodged with Paton Hooke, Lawyers, 25 Albert Street, Taree NSW, under the oversight of the Clerk of Synod and the Synod Treasurer (See Synod resolution 18.45.2).

No Deeds lodged during 2018

No Deeds uplifted during 2018

**Consideration of the Bequest of Peter McIntosh Martin**

There had been concern expressed as to who was the rightful recipient of this bequest. The Trustees responded to a request for examination and report from Central Presbytery as follows:

*Re Bequest of Peter McIntosh Martin: At the meeting of Presbytery on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 it was resolved as follows: That the distribution of the funds of this bequest be referred to the Trustees for examination and report to the next meeting of Presbytery.*

*The Trustees have investigated and considered the matter and advise as follows:*

- 1. Handbook 3.23 requires a congregation which has been left an unrestricted bequest to comply with the conditions of Handbook 3.23. Until the meeting of Presbytery on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 the Trustees had no knowledge of this bequest. Even if the Martin bequest was left to St George's the requirement of 3.23 has not been complied with.*
- 2. It would appear that the bequest was banked by St George's even though it was, or should, have been paid to Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, and that there was a legal case that involved St George's refunding part of the money received. The Trustees still had no knowledge of these proceedings.*
- 3. We would like to know what name was on the cheque from the Public Trustee. If it was made out to the PCEA then it was imprudent for St George to bank it. The legal advice we have from one highly experienced in church and charitable trust matters is that the bequest "was not a gift to the congregation at that address, or even to the congregation care of that address. It was to the denomination bearing the name stated, to be reached at that address."*
- 4. We would also like to know who gave the release to the Public Trustee and in what form?*
- 5. It is very difficult to determine where this money is lodged in the St George published accounts.*
- 6. The fact that St George's can use the money is immaterial to the legal and moral questions that seem involved in the situation.*
- 7. The Trustees, in line with Synod legislation, require all papers, correspondence and any other package or material in connection with this matter to be lodged with the Clerk of Synod, and we require this to occur within 21 days, following which further discussion will be held with St George's office-bearers who clearly have the appearance of a conflict of interest in this matter.*

8. It is noted, meantime, that the bequest and interest thereon is held for the denomination and not for St George's congregation, and Synod will determine the application of it in due course, including whether or not any or all of it be allocated to St George's or to other needs of the PCEA.

In response the Central Presbytery forwarded what is taken to be a Reference for consideration at Synod (Correspondence Item 14).

**Common Seal Applications:** Applications during 2018 were:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Document Executed</u>
249	07/11/18	Development application, repairs and conservation at St Georges

**Investments: Specified Capital Funds (Bequests) - Review of Results as at 31/12/18**  
**Diversification**

Actual as at 31/12/18		Asset Class	Investment Strategy	
Amount	Percentage		Benchmark	Range
149,884	47%	Cash (Banks) 1 <sup>st</sup> Regd	5%	5% - 10%
0	0%	Mtges	30%	20% - 40%
0	0%	Debentures	15%	10% - 25%
166,601	53%	Shares/Units	50%	40% - 60%
316,485	100%		100%	

No change in the spread of investments was made during 2018.

**Return:**

**Growth –**

Total Trust Funds (Specified Capital Funds) decreased by \$21,312 (6%) during 2018 against a Target of 1.8% (CPI). “Real value” (keeping up with inflation) was not therefore achieved.

When CPI is taken into account since 1998 total Capital Funds lag behind by \$146,974 (31%) as at 31/12/18 (25% 2017).

**Income –** Income of \$17,286 represented a return of 5% against a Target of 2.50% (2018 Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 1.50% Plus 1.00%).

**Summary**

*Diversification* – To minimise risk and achieve a reasonable return in a climate of low inflation and low interest rates, investments are only held in Banks and Equities (mostly in the financial sector).

*Strategy Objectives* – Growth – **Not achieved** for 2018 and **still behind** with CPI added since 1998.  
Income - **Achieved** for 2018.

**QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION**  
**'PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA'**  
Members: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer

**Deed Box and Common Seal:** The title deeds of the Church Property at Kalinga are held in the Locked Deed Box of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia with the Paton Hooke, Lawyers, 25 Albert Street, Taree NSW. The Common Seal is held by the Clerk of Synod. There were no applications of the Common Seal in 2017.

**Proposed Deliverances:** Nil.

**THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA OF  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA [TVIC]**

Incorporated by the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act, Victoria 1953.

**Trustees:**

R. S. Ward (Secretary 2013), Clerk (T. I. Leggott), Treasurer (D.P. Smith), D. J. Kerridge, S. A. Loudon

- 1. Property Holdings:** No changes since the full listing in 2015 except a 230m<sup>2</sup> church building plus 22 space car park was erected at 8 William Road, Carrum Downs in the City of Frankston and opened on 21 April 2018. The cost including land was \$898,097 and was fully funded by the Knox Congregation. The current Council Valuation is \$900,000 including \$680,000 for the land.
- 2. Bequests:** None reported
- 3. Contents of Custody Packet at Paton Hooke, Lawyers, Taree :** The next inspection should be made in 2020 prior to Synod of that year.
- 4. Common Seal Applications during 2018:** None

**5. Investments:** Current returns from fixed deposits are around 2.3%, not even covering typical real inflation. The only option in many cases is equity investment in shares of some of our well-established companies where returns of 8% including tax credits are readily obtainable, but at the risk of short-term fluctuation in value up or down. This is not a major issue where holdings are long-term. Also if holdings are realized at a loss down the track one has to take account of the higher income they have generated while held. Bank shares declined significantly during the year as a consequence of the disclosures in the Royal Commission, but recovery over the next two or three years can be anticipated. ANZ already shows improvement but NAB has more to do. Meanwhile dividend returns are good even if some reduction in NAB and BOQ dividends occurs.

TVIC's Investment Strategy's Objectives as approved by Synod are:

- **CAPITAL:** To grow Bequest Funds by the rate of inflation. CPI Inflation was about 2% for year ended 31/12/17. The result in 2018 was **minus 10%** (last year plus 5.49%).
- **INCOME:** To achieve income from Bequest Funds of 1.00%pa above the Official Cash Rate set by the Reserve Bank of Australia. - Cash Rate 31/12/2017 and 2018 was 1.5%. The 2018 figure was plus **4.9%**. (The 2017 figure was 5.2% excluding a late tax refund for 2016 received in 2017).

**INVESTMENT ALLOCATION:** Allocation according to the investment strategy approved by Synod 2014 was:

Asset Class	Benchmark Range permitted	Allocation 31/12/2018
Cash/mortgages/debentures	30% (25-35)	33
Shares/units	70% (65-75)	67

Our funds are virtually all perpetual trusts where the capital must be held forever. Given current bank interest rates around 2.3%, and not keeping up with real inflation, and suggestions RBA will reduce the official rate further, we need to raise the amount in equities, particular in listed investment companies that will return around 5.5-6%. I might add that LICs like Argo, AFI, BKI do not fluctuate as much as individual stocks as they are invested over a range of leading shares. While one misses the potential of extraordinary gain, they pay steady dividends and reduce the need for constant monitoring.

The rapid escalation of real estate values, particularly in our cities, needs careful consideration.

We need major bequest funds to be built up so as to support extension work in our rapidly growing cities.

**Proposed Deliverances:**

1. The investment allocation approved by Synod 2004 be amended to be permit up to 80% in shares/units predominantly in listed investment companies, and the balance in cash.
2. Synod commend to our people giving by bequest to aid the extension of the Gospel in Australia and overseas.

# Correspondence 1



## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge, 36 Bruce Drive, Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694 Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

4<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,

### Remit to Presbyteries under Barrier Act re Safe Church legislation

Dear Trevor,

The Northern Presbytery has considered the matter regarding the Safe Church legislation which has come down to us under the Barrier Act. We have voted unanimously to approve the remitted overture, with comments attached.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St, Maclean on Saturday, 9th February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

### EXTRACT MINUTE

#### Business Arising

1. The annual affirmation of understanding of the Guidelines for Church Workers was made by all members.  
2. The remit from the Law and Advisory Committee re Safe Church legislation sent down under Barrier Act procedure was considered. Considerable discussion followed. It was moved and seconded that the Overture remitted be approved. Concerns were expressed regarding wording of certain items. After further discussion it was agreed to defer a decision until Mr Carswell and Mr Kerridge conferred to determine whether these matters were of such a concern as to affect the vote. They agreed to report back to the Court after the adjournment.....

[AFTER OTHER BUSINESS]

The Court adjourned at 3:50pm for refreshments, for the committee appointed on the Safe Church matter to confer, and to examine records.

The Court resumed at 4:30pm.

#### Synod remit

The report of Messrs D. Kerridge and S. Carswell regarding concerns raised in discussion of the remit previously was presented. It was agreed by the reporters that none of the concerns raised affected the vote being taken. It was found that the concerns related mostly to preferences for wording but that they should be appended to any decision as comments with the expectation that the Synod and Law and Advisory Committee would take them into consideration as per Handbook 5.39.4. viz:

“It is competent for the substance of remarks by Presbyteries which in no way modify the substance, sense or intention of the overture to be adopted by the Synod.” .

The other concern relating to the enactment and change of legislation directly through the action of the Law and Advisory Committee in items 3 and 6. of the Interim Act Policy was considered to be a matter for discussion regarding the role and power of Committees, but that it was outside the matter at hand. The original motion, previously moved and seconded was put to the vote. It was carried that the overture remitted be approved (i.e. the current Interim Act), with comments appended and sent to Synod (per Handbook 5.39.4). The comments being as follows;

#### Re: Safe Church Policy

1. **Introduction** In the second paragraph, at “It is a privilege to serve Christ in working with all those who entrust themselves to our care, particularly children and young people” add “and the vulnerable” to include those who, though not in the first two classes mentioned, are still susceptible to abuse, and are also referred to in legislation.

**2. A Biblical Perspective.** Add to the phrase “The institutional church is not free from such abuse as it is comprised of sinful people at varying levels of Christian commitment” the words “as well as the unsaved” (cf. WCF Ch. 25.4 and 5)

**3.** (and see 6. below, and comments above) **Outline of Principles and Practices by the PCEA and its Congregations**

Point 1. “Advocating Biblical ministry...” be changed to “ Advocating Biblical principles... Also add “We believe” to the second sentence “This will result in a safe, friendly and nurturing environment.” Unlike the proud world, and by too many sad examples, no statement of Policy can determine such a definite outcome. It is our desire that this would be so, and believe that we work toward this to the very best of our ability, but we cannot rely on any document to make it so. We understand that this is addressed in the preamble to the Interim Act, and in part 2., but we feel that this should continue throughout the document.

The words “under the oversight of the Synod Law & Advisory Committee” be changed to “with advice from the Synod Law & Advisory Committee”.

**4. Some Definitions**

**4.5 WWCC** Two forms of identification will be required and an on-line application process is used ~~now~~.

**5. Positions for Ministry** [A formatting issue – a carriage return mid-sentence, as printed]

**6.** (see item 3. above, and previous comments) **Code of Conduct for Church Workers 2018** The words in the last sentence “This Code may be updated from time to time by the Synod through its Law & Advisory Committee” be amended to “This Code may be updated from time to time by the Synod with advice from its Law & Advisory Committee.”

**Re: Code of Conduct**

**3. a.** Concerns relating to the transport of children, and the manner in which this is done, specifically with a parents own children in the car, were questioned, but it was noted that this protocol is part of both proposed PCEA Codes of Conduct, other churches’ Codes, a part of the training already undergone under the Interim Act in NSW through Breaking the Silence, and State legislation. This is a sad outcome of the present state of the world.

**3. i.** A general concern was raised regarding weddings or other events on Church premises and the consumption of alcohol there being forbidden. The Northern Presbytery already flagged their concern regarding the sacramental use of wine and this was added to the Code prior to it coming down under Barrier Act. Whilst a proper decorum must always be maintained, and drunkenness is a sin, even the Lord was present at a wedding and provided wine which gladdens the heart of man (Ps 104:15). A good number of our churches have Halls on the grounds that have been used for the purposes of weddings. Whilst this matter does not seriously affect the vote we have taken, we ask that the Synod consider a revision of the Act relating to the total prohibition of alcohol by the phrase “The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on the church grounds or during a church activity is forbidden”.

The Clerk was directed to transmit the result of the vote, with the above comments, by Extract Minute to the Clerk of Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery



## Correspondence 2



*Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia*  
**Central Presbytery**

**Clerk: Rev Dennis K Muldoon**, BScAgr, PhD, BD, MA (Theol)  
PO Box 3007 Mt Druitt Village, NSW, 2770  
Ph 02 97240877  
Email [dkmuldoon@hotmail.com](mailto:dkmuldoon@hotmail.com)

To Clerk of Synod, PCEA  
Rev T I Leggott  
PO Box 126 Taree 2430

8 December 2018

Dear Sir,

Below is an extract minutes (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery at Raymond Terrace 11 September, 2018. This minute relates to PCEA Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct (ref 18.18 Synod Minutes 2018 p18).

### EXTRACT MINUTE

#### **8. Synod matters: Barrier Act Procedure**

**Resolved (unanimous)** to approve *simpliciter* the remit from Synod 2018 under Barrier Act procedure re Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct (ref 18.18 Synod 2018 Minutes).

Yours

Rev. Dr D.K. Muldoon  
Clerk of Central Presbytery

## Correspondence 3



### **SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY** **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA**

Clerk: *Rev Dr Rowland S. Ward*

2 Hadlow Drive,  
Wantirna 3152  
T: 03 9720 4871 M: 0421 823 231  
E: Rowland.ward@gmail.com

18 March 2019

Synod Clerk,  
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia  
PO Box 126,  
TAREE 2430

Dear Trevor,

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 2 March 2019, *inter alia*,

The Presbytery took up the remit from Synod 2018 concerning Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct and resolved by a 5-1 vote to disapprove the remit but express the view that the Policy and Code of Conduct of the PCNSW be adopted by Synod.

Extracted from the records of Southern Presbytery,

With warm greetings in Christ,

Rowland S. Ward  
CLERK

## Correspondence 4



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

#### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

13<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,  
Rev. T. Leggott

#### Overture concerning Synod Timetable

Dear Trevor,

Attached please find an Overture from Northern Presbytery regarding Synod Timetable arrangements. The Overture follows along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

#### WHEREAS,

the Sessions, Presbyteries and the Synod of the church are the essential assemblies of the church where ordained office-bearers exercise their leadership responsibilities as under-shepherds called by God, while the Committees of Synod are merely the optional servants of Synod and can include members who are not special office-bearers, and,

#### WHEREAS,

the practice of recent Synods of giving consideration to deliverances from Committees before related correspondence from Sessions and Presbyteries gives the impression that the Synodical Committees are more important and take priority over the lower assemblies,

#### NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia to switch and revise sections 5.35 and 5.36 of the PCEA Handbook of Practice and Procedure, so that the current section 5.36 will become section 5.35 and read as follows:

“The Synod takes up and deals with overtures, references, appeals, complaints, petitions and other correspondence, and committee reports subject to the provisions of 5.2-25 and to Synod Standing Orders (5.46). Correspondence from the Sessions and the Presbyteries will take priority over other correspondence and over committee reports. Overtures may also originate in the Synod itself.”

and the current section 5.35 will become section 5.36 and read as follows,

“In recommending the order of business for each sitting of Synod, the Administration Committee takes care to recommend a timetable that gives priority to correspondence from the sessions and presbyteries of the church, but also allows reports of standing committees to have a place that allows due consideration. In accordance with Synod Standing Orders, causes are normally held over until the last day of Synod, other than appeals or complaints against transmission which, depending on the circumstances, may be taken up with the Administration Committee’s report.”

[Note - the relevant sections currently read as follows:

5.35 In recommending the order of business for each sitting of Synod, the Administration Committee takes care to recommend a **timetable** that allows reports of standing committees to have a place that allows due consideration. In accordance with Synod Standing Orders, causes are normally held over until the last day of Synod, other than appeals or complaints against transmission which, depending on the circumstances, may be taken up with the Administration Committee’s report.

5.36 The Synod takes up and deals with overtures, references, appeals, complaints, petitions and other correspondence, and committee reports subject to the provisions of 5.2-25 and to Synod Standing Orders (5.46). Overtures may also originate in the Synod itself.]

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

EXTRACT MINUTE

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kerridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 5



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

#### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

4<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod  
Rev. T. Leggott

#### **Overture re Administration Committee**

Dear Trevor,

Regarding a change to the Administration Committee made at last year's Synod the Northern Presbytery respectfully submits the following Overture, along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

#### WHEREAS,

at the 2018 Synod meeting a change was made at the last minute to the composition of the Administration Committee, without having been suggested in the distributed standing committee reports, and without adequate discussion on the floor of Synod as to the need for this change, and,

#### WHEREAS,

while the Administration Committee has previously included the convenor of the Law and Advisory Committee, that position on the Administration Committee was deliberately removed (see 2013 Synod Minutes 13.40), and it is not immediately evident that it was necessary for that decision to be reversed,

NOW THEREFORE, the Northern Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, hereby overture your revered Court to change the composition of the Administration Committee back to the structure put forward in the Report of the Administration Committee distributed before the 2018 synod meeting, so that the committee would again consist of: the Clerk of Synod (Convenor), the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, and the General Treasurer, or to do otherwise as you in your wisdom may deem fit.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St, Maclean on Saturday, 9th February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

EXTRACT MINUTE

**Item C1** Overture from Brisbane Session re Administration Committee. It was moved, seconded and carried that the correspondence be received. After comments from the Moderator, it was moved, seconded and carried to grant the prayer of the overture, adopt it and transmit it to Synod in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

at the 2018 Synod meeting a change was made at the last minute to the composition of the Administration Committee, without having been suggested in the distributed standing committee reports, and without adequate discussion on the floor of Synod as to the need for this change, and,

WHEREAS,

while the Administration Committee has previously included the convenor of the Law and Advisory Committee, that position on the Administration Committee was deliberately removed (see 2013 Synod Minutes 13.40), and it is not immediately evident that it was necessary for that decision to be reversed,

NOW THEREFORE, the Northern Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, hereby overture your revered Court to change the composition of the Administration Committee back to the structure put forward in the Report of the Administration Committee distributed before the 2018 Synod meeting, so that the committee would again consist of: the Clerk of Synod (Convenor), the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, and the General Treasurer, or to do otherwise as you in your wisdom may deem fit.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kerridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 6



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

#### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

13<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,  
Rev. T. Leggott

#### **Overture concerning Psalmody Committee**

Dear Trevor,

Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures your revered Court regarding the matter of a standing Psalmody Committee. The Overture follows along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

#### WHEREAS,

it should be the proper object of each congregation to praise God to the best of our ability by singing Psalms tunefully in worship, and with a special care to sing with understanding and with grace in the heart. (per Directory for Worship: "In singing of psalms, the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord."); and,

#### WHEREAS,

there is an ongoing need to teach the biblical principles of purity of worship especially to the young within our churches and to those who are new to the PCEA and may not be familiar with the biblical foundation of our principles.

#### WHEREAS,

assistance to the precentors in each congregation by providing resources, encouragement and conference can only further good congregational singing; and,

#### WHEREAS,

In the past there was a Synod Psalmody Committee to support and facilitate these purposes. This was amalgamated with the then styled Faith and Life Committee (Synod 1988), which was itself renamed Church and Nation Committee (Synod 1989), and, over time, the emphasis on supporting and facilitating psalmody has been lost; and,

WHEREAS,

Synod 2018 unanimously agreed with the three recommendations of the Church and Nation Committee's Report of that year to promote the study, preaching and singing of Psalms within the PCEA.

NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery do humbly Overture this revered Court to re-establish the Psalmody Committee as a Standing Committee of the Synod. Further, that the Committee consist of a Minister and Elder and include as members one Session-appointed Precentor from each Presbytery to facilitate co-operation, fellowship, consultation, and a shared repertoire of tunes.

Or to do otherwise for this object as the Court in its wisdom sees fit.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St Maclean, on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**Item C7** Draft Overture from Northern Rivers Minister re Psalmody Committee.

It was moved, seconded and agreed to receive the correspondence. The matter was discussed. It was moved, seconded and carried, with reference to the original draft, to overture the Synod in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

it should be the proper object of each congregation to praise God to the best of our ability by singing Psalms tunefully in worship, and with a special care to sing with understanding and with grace in the heart. (per Directory for Worship: "In singing of psalms, the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord."); and,

WHEREAS,

there is an ongoing need to teach the biblical principles of purity of worship especially to the young within our churches and to those who are new to the PCEA and may not be familiar with the biblical foundation of our principles.

WHEREAS,

assistance to the Precentors in each congregation by providing resources, encouragement and conference can only further good congregational singing; and,

WHEREAS,

In the past there was a Synod Psalmody Committee to support and facilitate these purposes. This was amalgamated with the then styled Faith and Life Committee (Synod 1988), which was itself renamed Church and Nation Committee (Synod 1989), and, over time, the emphasis on supporting and facilitating psalmody has been lost; and,

WHEREAS,

Synod 2018 unanimously agreed with the three recommendations of the Church and Nation Committee's Report of that year to promote the study, preaching and singing of Psalms within the PCEA.

NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery do humbly Overture this revered Court to re-establish the Psalmody Committee as a Standing Committee of the Synod. Further, that the Committee consist of a Minister and Elder and include as members one Session-appointed Precentor from each Presbytery to facilitate co-operation, fellowship, consultation, and a shared repertoire of tunes.

Or to do otherwise for this object as the Court in its wisdom sees fit.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kerridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 7



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

**Clerk**

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

18<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,  
Rev. T. Leggott

#### **Overture concerning Communion Cups**

Dear Trevor,

There have been concerns raised within Presbytery regarding the use of individual cups and a desire has emerged to have this matter answered at Synod level with a view to uniform practice. An Overture to this effect follows, along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

some members of the Brisbane congregation have suggested that we might adopt the use of individual cups in the Lord's Supper Sacrament rather than a Communal Cup or Cups and,

WHEREAS,

as far as we are aware, this has never been discussed and approved as the practice in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia and,

WHEREAS,

we would not wish to be the cause of dissension or division in the Church,

NOW THEREFORE,

The Northern Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures your revered Court to give guidance on whether individual cups may be used in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as opposed to the use of Communal Cups, or to do otherwise as you in your wisdom may deem fit.

Mr S. Carswell was appointed to state the overture at Synod.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St Maclean, on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

Item C3 Overture from Brisbane Session re Communion Cups.

It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the correspondence. It was moved, seconded and carried to adopt the Overture, and transmit it, with amendments to the wording, to Synod in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

some members of the Brisbane congregation have suggested that we might adopt the use of individual cups in the Lord's Supper Sacrament rather than a Communal Cup or Cups and,

WHEREAS,

as far as we are aware, this has never been discussed and approved as the practice in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia and,

WHEREAS,

we would not wish to be the cause of dissension or division in the Church,

NOW THEREFORE,

The Northern Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures your revered Court to give guidance on whether individual cups may be used in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as opposed to the use of Communal Cups, or to do otherwise as you in your wisdom may deem fit.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Kerridge', written in a cursive style.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 8



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

**Clerk**

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

4<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,  
Rev. T. Leggott

#### **Overture concerning All Nations Congregation**

Dear Trevor,

Following certain matters coming to our attention regarding All Nations Congregation, we feel duty-bound as a Presbytery to bring these matters to the attention of the Synod to deal with in a brotherly and loving manner for the edification of all. The Overture follows along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

the development of the All Nations congregation has been a source of much joy throughout the PCEA and thankfulness to the Lord for the opportunity, in His providence, to share in the fellowship of the ministry to the Sudanese community in Melbourne.

WHEREAS,

it is desirable to continue to encourage the brothers and sisters of the All Nations congregation in the Lord, and desirable that they should continue together as a worshipping community.

WHEREAS,

it is also necessary for the PCEA to uphold, in all its congregations, its pledged commitment to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church, and it is apparent that, though now a fully sanctioned charge, certain practices of the All Nations congregation do not accord fully with the purity of worship or received government of the PCEA.

WHEREAS,

it is recognised that there may be social and cultural factors that have given rise to this situation and, though it is imperative that purity of worship and uniformity be restored within the bounds of the PCEA as a matter of urgency, this matter may be treated with wisdom and compassion and not as a disciplinary matter.

WHEREAS,  
the Southern Presbytery does not have the manpower to adequately and independently review this matter since two out of three ministers of the Presbytery are also members of the All Nations Session.

WHEREAS,  
the upholding of purity of worship in all congregations is a matter of legitimate interest and concern to the whole church.

NOW THEREFORE,  
the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and appoint a committee to confer with the members of the Southern Presbytery and with the members of the Session of the All Nations congregation with a view to the following:

1. To assess the extent to which the practice of the All Nations congregation has diverged from the received government and purity of worship of the PCEA.
2. To identify the origins of any such departure.
3. Recognising the significant cultural factors, to assess the likelihood of the All Nations congregation being able to conform its worship practices to the purity of worship of the PCEA in the near future and to assess what steps are being taken in this direction.

The committee is to conduct itself in a ministerial and brotherly way, having no power to impose its opinions or proposals on the Southern Presbytery or the All Nations congregation, and the committee to report back to the next ordinary meeting of Synod.

Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom the Synod may deem best.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St Maclean, on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

Item C4 Draft Overture from Hastings Minister re All Nations.

It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the correspondence. After some considerable discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to overture the Synod, with amendments to the original draft, in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,  
the development of the All Nations congregation has been a source of much joy throughout the PCEA and thankfulness to the Lord for the opportunity, in His providence, to share in the fellowship of the ministry to the Sudanese community in Melbourne.

WHEREAS,  
it is desirable to continue to encourage the brothers and sisters of the All Nations congregation in the Lord, and desirable that they should continue together as a worshipping community.

WHEREAS,  
it is also necessary for the PCEA to uphold, in all its congregations, its pledged commitment to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church, and it is apparent that, though

now a fully sanctioned charge, certain practices of the All Nations congregation do not accord fully with the purity of worship or received government of the PCEA.

WHEREAS,

it is recognised that there may be social and cultural factors that have given rise to this situation and, though it is imperative that purity of worship and uniformity be restored within the bounds of the PCEA as a matter of urgency, this matter may be treated with wisdom and compassion and not as a disciplinary matter.

WHEREAS,

the Southern Presbytery does not have the manpower to adequately and independently review this matter since two out of three ministers of the Presbytery are also members of the All Nations Session.

WHEREAS,

the upholding of purity of worship in all congregations is a matter of legitimate interest and concern to the whole church.

NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and appoint a committee to confer with the members of the Southern Presbytery and with the members of the Session of the All Nations congregation with a view to the following:

1. To assess the extent to which the practice of the All Nations congregation has diverged from the received government and purity of worship of the PCEA.
2. To identify the origins of any such departure.
3. Recognising the significant cultural factors, to assess the likelihood of the All Nations congregation being able to conform its worship practices to the purity of worship of the PCEA in the near future and to assess what steps are being taken in this direction.

The committee is to conduct itself in a ministerial and brotherly way, having no power to impose its opinions or proposals on the Southern Presbytery or the All Nations congregation, and the committee to report back to the next ordinary meeting of Synod.

Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom the Synod may deem best.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,



Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 9



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA Northern Presbytery

#### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge, 36 Bruce Drive, Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694 Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

13<sup>th</sup> March, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,  
Revs. T. Leggott

#### Overture concerning Religious Festivals

Dear Trevor,

While considering certain other matters, the Northern Presbytery has decided to respectfully overture the Synod regarding the matter of Religious Festivals. The Overture follows along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

#### WHEREAS

the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia is committed to purity of worship as understood by the reformed Church of Scotland and holding to the same foundational principle which is *“that nothing is to be admitted in the worship of God but what is prescribed in the Holy Scriptures”* (1707 Act against Innovations, Handbook p71)

#### WHEREAS

there is no warrant in the Scriptures for the celebration of Christmas and Easter, and for this reason the PCEA, as also the reformed Church of Scotland before her, has not observed these festivals in its congregations.

#### WHEREAS

the constitutional nature of this position is clearly established from the Acts of the pre-Disruption General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (supplied as a separate document) including 1560 Book of Discipline, 1566 Exceptions to the Helvetic Confession, 1638 Act removing the Articles of Perth, and 1645 Directory for Public Worship of God, which states, *“There is no day commanded in scripture to be kept holy under the gospel but the Lord's day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days, vulgarly called Holy-days, having no warrant in the word of God, are not to be continued.”*

#### WHEREAS

the Church has sometimes found it necessary to restate its position in this regard, as evidenced by the statement of the Northern Presbytery in its minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1980, *“Presbytery reaffirm that there is no Biblical warrant and, consequently, no observance by our Church of the festivals of Christmas and Easter as days to be kept holy to God. At the same time, in view of the widespread observances of these days, it may be considered helpful in Sabbath Services to refer to the Biblical truth commemorated on that particular day with a view to setting forth Biblical truth regarding it, or in order to refute erroneous views.”*

WHEREAS

it has become apparent that Christmas Eve and Good Friday services have taken place in a PCEA congregation.

WHEREAS

the Christmas Eve service was highlighted on a congregational newsletter which is also circulated to people in other parts of the PCEA and so the matter has become widely known throughout the Church.

WHEREAS

it is necessary that the existing position of the Church in this matter be restated and reaffirmed for the sake of unity and uniformity.

WHEREAS

if any minister or congregation comes to believe that the existing constitutional position of the Church is unbiblical and desires to introduce a change to the practice, then they must first raise an overture in accordance with the terms of the Barrier Act of 1697 and prove their case to the Synod and presbyteries of the Church.

NOW THEREFORE

the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and reaffirm the position of this Church that there is no Biblical warrant and, consequently, no observance by this Church of the festivals of Christmas and Easter, and that the religious celebration of such festivals within this Church is not in accordance with the purity of worship and practice to which this Church is committed.

Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom the Synod may deem best.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St Maclean, on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**Item C5** Draft Overture from Hastings Minister re Religious Festivals.

It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the correspondence. Some considerable discussion followed. It was moved, seconded and carried to Overture the Synod, by amendment to the draft, in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia is committed to purity of worship as understood by the reformed Church of Scotland and holding to the same foundational principle which is "*that nothing is to be admitted in the worship of God but what is prescribed in the Holy Scriptures*" (1707 Act against Innovations, Handbook p71)

WHEREAS,

there is no warrant in the Scriptures for the celebration of Christmas and Easter, and for this reason the PCEA, as also the reformed Church of Scotland before her, has not observed these festivals in its congregations.

WHEREAS,

the constitutional nature of this position is clearly established from the Acts of the pre-Disruption General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (supplied as a separate document) including 1560 Book

of Discipline, 1566 Exceptions to the Helvetic Confession, 1638 Act removing the Articles of Perth, and 1645 Directory for Public Worship of God, which states, *“There is no day commanded in scripture to be kept holy under the gospel but the Lord's day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days, vulgarly called Holy-days, having no warrant in the word of God, are not to be continued.”*

WHEREAS,

the Church has sometimes found it necessary to restate its position in this regard, as evidenced by the statement of the Northern Presbytery in its minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1980, *“Presbytery reaffirm that there is no Biblical warrant and, consequently, no observance by our Church of the festivals of Christmas and Easter as days to be kept holy to God. At the same time, in view of the widespread observances of these days, it may be considered helpful in Sabbath Services to refer to the Biblical truth commemorated on that particular day with a view to setting forth Biblical truth regarding it, or in order to refute erroneous views.”*

WHEREAS,

it has become apparent that Christmas Eve and Good Friday services have taken place in a PCEA congregation.

WHEREAS,

the Christmas Eve service was highlighted on a congregational newsletter which is also circulated to people in other parts of the PCEA and so the matter has become widely known throughout the Church.

WHEREAS,

it is necessary that the existing position of the Church in this matter be restated and reaffirmed for the sake of unity and uniformity.

WHEREAS,

if any minister or congregation comes to believe that the existing constitutional position of the Church is unbiblical and desires to introduce a change to the practice, then they must first raise an overture in accordance with the terms of the Barrier Act of 1697 and prove their case to the Synod and presbyteries of the Church.

NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and reaffirm the position of this Church that there is no Biblical warrant and, consequently, no observance by this Church of the festivals of Christmas and Easter, and that the religious celebration of such festivals within this Church is not in accordance with the purity of worship and practice to which this Church is committed.

Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom the Synod may deem best.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Kerridge', written in a cursive style.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 10



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

#### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

18<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod,  
Rev. T. Leggott

#### Overture concerning Inter-Church Relations Committee

Dear Trevor,

The Presbytery has agreed to respectfully overture the Synod on the matter of the work of the Inter-Church Relations Committee. The Overture follows along with the required Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

#### WHEREAS,

when men are sent as representatives of this church to meetings of other churches, it is an important part of their task to accurately represent the decisions and positions of our church to the best of their knowledge.

#### WHEREAS,

representatives are not necessarily required to state agreement with everything our church does but should make it clear when they are speaking on their own behalf, and not on behalf of our church.

#### NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and to thank the Inter-Church Relations Committee for continuing in the important work of sending men to attend assembly meetings of other churches and encourages the Committee to remind these men that when they are sent as a representative of our church, they should see it as an important part of their task to accurately represent the decisions and positions of our church to the best of their knowledge. While this does not require them to state agreement with everything our church does, they should be reticent to express an opinion contrary to the decisions and positions of our church. But if they must, they should be very clear, to the best of their knowledge, how it is that their position differs from the decisions and positions of our denomination.

Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom the Synod may deem best.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St Maclean, on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

Item C2 Overture from Brisbane Session re Inter-Church Relations Committee. It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the correspondence as follows:

We, the Session of the Brisbane Congregation, hereby overture your revered Court to overture the 2019 Synod of Eastern Australia to resolve the following: "Synod thanks the Inter-Church Relations Committee for continuing in the important work of sending men to attend assembly meetings of other churches. Synod also encourages the committee to remind these men that when they are sent as a representative of our church, they should see it as an important part of their task to accurately represent the decisions and positions of our church to the best of their knowledge. While this does not require them to necessarily state agreement with everything our church does, they must make it clear when they are speaking on their own behalf, and not on behalf of our church."

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the Northern Presbytery grant the crave of the Brisbane Session and agree to overture the 2019 Synod accordingly, with discussed amendments, in these terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

when men are sent as representatives of this church to meetings of other churches, it is an important part of their task to accurately represent the decisions and positions of our church to the best of their knowledge.

WHEREAS,

representatives are not necessarily required to state agreement with everything our church does but should make it clear when they are speaking on their own behalf, and not on behalf of our church.

NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and to thank the Inter-Church Relations Committee for continuing in the important work of sending men to attend assembly meetings of other churches and encourages the Committee to remind these men that when they are sent as a representative of our church, they should see it as an important part of their task to accurately represent the decisions and positions of our church to the best of their knowledge. While this does not require them to state agreement with everything our church does, they should be reticent to express an opinion contrary to the decisions and positions of our church. But if they must, they should be very clear, to the best of their knowledge, how it is that their position differs from the decisions and positions of our denomination.

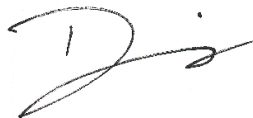
Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom the Synod may deem best.

The Clerk was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,



Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

# Correspondence 11



## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod, and Convener of Synod Finance Committee  
Rev. T. Leggott and Mr A. Steel

### Stipend Relief Request from Brisbane Congregation Deacons' Court

Dear Trevor and Alex,

We have again received a request from Brisbane Deacons' Court for continuing Stipend Relief. The Presbytery has acceded to the petition from the Deacon's Court and agreed to transmit it to the Finance Committee as per Synod 1983 Act 1 Class 2, clause 5 re Finance Requests – Stipend Relief.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St, Maclean on Saturday, 9th February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**Item C9** Petition from Brisbane Congregation Deacon's Court re Stipend Relief.

It was moved, seconded and carried that the correspondence be received. Mr Carswell appeared in support of the Petition, as follows:

To the Northern Presbytery, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia;

We, the Deacons' Court of the Brisbane Congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia do humbly petition your revered Court to request the Finance Committee of Synod to provide Stipend Assistance to the Brisbane Congregation in the amount of \$20,000 for the current year, on a needs basis, or to do otherwise as you in your wisdom may deem fit.

It was moved seconded and carried that the prayer of the petition of the Brisbane Deacons' Court for Stipend Relief be granted and the Presbytery now forward it with supporting documents to the Synod (Finance Committee) for consideration and action (per Act 1 Class 2, clause 5, Synod 1983 re Finance requests - Stipend Relief) according to the terms of the petition, noting that other Deacons' Courts within the Presbytery will be notified of the need and requested to apportion funds to aid Brisbane as they are able in this Synodical year (per Handbook 3.17d).

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

Rev. David Kerridge,  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 12



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

#### Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod  
Revs. T. Leggott

#### **Overture from Northern Presbytery to effect Sale of Lismore Church /Hall**

Dear Trevor,

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St, Maclean on Saturday, 9th February, 2019, *inter alia*, a petition was brought from the Northern Rivers Deacons' Court requesting the Presbytery to overture the Synod to effect the sale of the Lismore Church/Hall property at 20 Phillip St, Goonellabah. The Congregation had agreed to the sale, by a unanimous vote, at a Congregational Meeting called for this purpose by the NR Session on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2019. The subsequent overture from Presbytery follows along with the relevant Extract Minute.

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

WHEREAS,

the maintenance of the Church/Hall building at 20 Phillip St, Goonellabah has already entailed a substantial cost and may soon become more costly and burdensome due to the age of the building; and,

WHEREAS,

there have been no worship services conducted by the PCEA in the building for many years, and no scope for a work to be renewed in the area in the foreseeable future, according to the Session; and,

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane Congregation is in need of a Manse to further their ministry in a major metropolitan area, and the provision of such would lessen or negate their need of stipend relief; and,

WHEREAS,

there has been interest from the Richmond Valley Care-ring Association Incorporated that leases the building to buy it; and,

WHEREAS,

The Northern Rivers Congregation Deacons' Court has obtained the consent of the Northern Rivers Congregation by a unanimous vote to sell the aforesaid building at a Congregational Meeting, duly called by the authority of the Session, on 30th January, 2019.

NOW THEREFORE

The Northern Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia respectfully overtures the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to take these recitals into consideration and to authorize the sale of the Church/ Hall property at 20 Phillip St, Goonellabah, by the said Deacons' Court, for not less than \$300,000, or in accordance with current fair market value obtained by professional opinion at the time of sale; The Synod direct and authorise the Trustees to sign and seal the necessary documents accordingly; and for the said Deacons' Court to apply the proceeds as follows: (1) the sum of \$200,000 be reserved for the benefit of the Brisbane congregation towards the purchase of a Manse and invested in the interim by the Northern River's Deacons' Court (2) the remainder to be applied at the discretion of the Deacons' Court, for the primary purposes of maintenance and repair of existing property held for Northern Rivers congregation. Or to do otherwise for this object as in your wisdom you see fit."

The Clerk was appointed to state the overture at Synod.

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**Item C12** Petition from Northern Rivers Deacons' Court to effect the sale of Lismore Church/Hall

It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the correspondence. It was moved, seconded and carried that the prayer of the petition be granted and that the Presbytery overture the Synod to further effect the sale (per Handbook 3.22 regarding the sale of places of worship) in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

WHEREAS,

the maintenance of the Church/Hall building at 20 Phillip St, Goonellabah has already entailed a substantial cost and may soon become more costly and burdensome due to the age of the building; and,

WHEREAS,

there have been no worship services conducted by the PCEA in the building for many years, and no scope for a work to be renewed in the area in the foreseeable future, according to the Session; and,

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane Congregation is in need of a Manse to further their ministry in a major metropolitan area, and the provision of such would lessen or negate their need of stipend relief; and,

WHEREAS,

there has been interest from the Richmond Valley Care-ring Association Incorporated that leases the building to buy it; and,

WHEREAS,

The Northern Rivers Congregation Deacons' Court has obtained the consent of the Northern Rivers Congregation by a unanimous vote to sell the aforesaid building at a Congregational Meeting, duly called by the authority of the Session, on 30th January, 2019.

NOW THEREFORE

The Northern Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia respectfully overtures the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to take these recitals into consideration and to authorize the sale of the Church/ Hall property at 20 Phillip St, Goonellabah, by the said Deacons' Court, for not less than \$300,000, or in accordance with current fair market value obtained by professional opinion at the time of sale; The Synod direct and authorise the Trustees to sign and seal the necessary documents accordingly; and for the said Deacons' Court to apply the proceeds as follows: (1) the sum of \$200,000 be reserved for the benefit of the Brisbane congregation towards the purchase of a Manse and invested in the interim by the Northern River's Deacons' Court (2) the remainder to be applied at the discretion of the Deacons' Court, for the primary purposes of maintenance and repair of existing property held for Northern Rivers congregation. Or to do otherwise for this object as in your wisdom you see fit."

The Clerk was appointed to state the overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kerridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 13



### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

**Clerk**

Rev. David Kerridge,  
36 Bruce Drive,  
Gulmarrad, NSW 2463  
Phone: 02 6645 1694  
Mobile: 0411 023344  
Email: dkerridge@pcea.org.au

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

To the Clerk of Synod, and Synod Capital Assistance Fund (Convener of Finance Committee)  
Revs. T. Leggott and Alex Steel

**Petition from Brisbane Deacons' Court re Manse Purchase**

Dear Trevor and Alex,

We have received a request from Brisbane Deacons' Court for an agreement to finance the purchase of a Manse from the Capital Assistance Fund. The Presbytery agreed to grant the prayer of the petition, and in turn overture the Synod on behalf of the Brisbane Deacons' Court in this matter. The Overture follows along with the relevant Extract Minute and supporting documents presented to our Presbytery (attachment "Manse Petition 2019\_1.pdf").

**OVERTURE**

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane congregation is the Northern-most congregation of the PCEA and ought to remain a witness of the Reformed faith in Australia's 3rd largest city; and,

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane congregation has needed to receive stipend relief from the Synods of 2017 and 2018 to help meet the financial obligations of the congregation; and,

WHEREAS,

while they are still not able to be self-funding, the weekly tithes and offerings have been increasing over the last several years, and they would likely be able to meet the ongoing costs of the congregation if rent for a manse were not required; and,

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane congregation has a little over \$100,000 set aside for the future purchase of a manse; and,

WHEREAS,

the Northern Rivers congregation has graciously indicated that they intend to gift \$200,000 from the proposed sale of the Lismore church property; and,

WHEREAS,

it was reported at the 2018 Synod that the capital assistance fund has approximately \$830,000 available, due largely to the recent sale of the Armidale church property; and,

WHEREAS,

while the median house price in Brisbane was \$673,000 (Sept 2018 - REIQ), a suitable manse would require 5 bedrooms (4 bed + study), be within a suitable distance from the church building and from church members, and take into account a number of other factors, and so would probably cost somewhat more than the median; and,

WHEREAS,

it is difficult and impractical to pursue an actual property without knowing what funds are available; and,

WHEREAS,

the purchase of a specific manse would still require congregation and presbytery approval;

NOW THEREFORE,

the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to make money from the capital assistance fund available to the Brisbane congregation for the purchase of a suitable manse up to the value of \$750,000, with monies raised and/or set aside for the purchase going back into the fund, the balance being gifted, and any actual purchase being subject to approval of the congregation and Northern Presbytery; or to do otherwise for this purpose, as it in its wisdom may see fit.

Mr Stewart Carswell was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 8 Wharf St, Maclean at 1:00pm on Saturday, 9th February, 2019, *inter alia*, it was moved, seconded and carried that;

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**Item C10** Petition from Brisbane Deacons' Court re Manse Purchase.

It was moved, seconded and carried to receive the correspondence. The Moderator stepped down from the Chair to present the petition as co-petitioner with Mr Carswell. It was agreed that Rev. John Forbes assume the Chair. Rev. Klazinga spoke to the proposal, Mr Carswell added his comments. It was moved seconded and carried that the prayer of the Petition be granted and Presbytery now Overture the Synod in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane congregation is the Northern-most congregation of the PCEA and ought to remain a witness of the Reformed faith in Australia's 3rd largest city; and,

WHEREAS,

the Brisbane congregation has needed to receive stipend relief from the Synods of 2017 and 2018 to help meet the financial obligations of the congregation; and,

WHEREAS, while they are still not able to be self-funding, the weekly tithes and offerings have been increasing over the last several years, and they would likely be able to meet the ongoing costs of the congregation if rent for a manse were not required; and,

WHEREAS,  
the Brisbane congregation has a little over \$100,000 set aside for the future purchase of a manse; and,

WHEREAS,  
the Northern Rivers congregation has graciously indicated that they intend to gift \$200,000 from the proposed sale of the Lismore church property; and,

WHEREAS,  
it was reported at the 2018 Synod that the capital assistance fund has approximately \$830,000 available, due largely to the recent sale of the Armidale church property; and,

WHEREAS,  
while the median house price in Brisbane was \$673,000 (Sept 2018 - REIQ), a suitable manse would require 5 bedrooms (4 bed + study), be within a suitable distance from the church building and from church members, and take into account a number of other factors, and so would probably cost somewhat more than the median; and,

WHEREAS,  
it is difficult and impractical to pursue an actual property without knowing what funds are available; and,

WHEREAS,  
the purchase of a specific manse would still require congregation and presbytery approval;

NOW THEREFORE,  
the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the 2019 Synod to make money from the capital assistance fund available to the Brisbane congregation for the purchase of a suitable manse up to the value of \$750,000, with monies raised and/or set aside for the purchase going back into the fund, the balance being gifted, and any actual purchase being subject to approval of the congregation and Northern Presbytery; or to do otherwise for this purpose, as it in its wisdom may see fit.

Mr Stewart Carswell was appointed to state the Overture at Synod.

END OF EXTRACT

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Kerridge', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence 14



### *Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia*

#### **Central Presbytery**

**Clerk: Rev Dennis K Muldoon, BScAgr, PhD, BD, MA (Theol)**

PO Box 3007 Mt Druitt Village, NSW, 2770

Ph 02 97240877

Email [dkmuldoon@hotmail.com](mailto:dkmuldoon@hotmail.com)

To Clerk of Synod, PCEA  
Rev T I Leggott  
PO Box 126 Taree 2430

8 December 2018

Dear Sir,

Below is an extract minute (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery in the PCEA church at Raymond Terrace 11 September 2018 regarding the bequest of Peter McIntosh Martin.

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**Overture** from St Georges session was received and stated by Alex Steel

**Motion** of Alex Steel: That the matter regarding the consent of Central Presbytery being sought by St Georges Session to hold and administer the funds locally received from the estate of the late Peter McIntosh Martin be referred to the Synod of Eastern Australia in terms of Handbook 'Reference 6.6a to 6.6g' it being desirable that a larger body should first decide

**Motion** of the clerk: That the trustees be invited to the next meeting of Central Presbytery for further discussion and resolution.

On being put to the vote Mr Steel's motion was preferred

**Resolved** to refer the matter of the bequest to Synod in terms of Mr Steel's motion; Mr Alex Steel was appointed to state the case.

Yours

Rev. Dr D.K.Muldoon  
Clerk of Central Presbytery