

The Synod of Eastern Australia



Minutes

**Of the 173rd Annual Meeting
Held at Raymond Terrace NSW
4th May to 7th May 2021**

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

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1.

TUESDAY 4TH MAY 2021

4.30 PM

1. OPENING

Within the Raymond Terrace Church building of the Hunter Congregation, on Tuesday 4th May 2021, at 4.30pm, the Synod of Eastern Australia met. The Moderator Rev Robin Tso took the chair, and extended a welcome. Those gathered joined in praise, singing from Psalm 124 and the Moderator constituted the meeting leading in prayer.

2. MODERATOR'S SERMON

Mr Tso read from Matthew 17:1-18:5 and spoke on Greatness in the Kingdom of God under the three heads: the exultation in greatness, the explanation of greatness, and the exhortation because of greatness.

The moderator led in prayer. Those gathered joined in the singing of Psalm 133. Mr Muldoon and Mr Ward gave thanks to the moderator for his address.

3. ROLLS OF PRESBYTERY

The Certified Rolls of Presbyteries were tendered. Apologies for non-attendance were received from those marked † below.

Northern Presbytery	Ministers	Commissioned Elders
Brisbane	JD Klazinga	S Carswell
Hastings	J Forbes	G Hamilton #
Northern Rivers	DJ Kerridge	J Greensill
Central Presbytery		
Hawkesbury/Nepean	DK Muldoon	TM Reeve
Hunter	R Tso	AH Steel
Manning	GD Ball	TI Leggott
St. George's	JA McCallum	DA McIntosh
Southern Presbytery		
Geelong	Vacant	D Ramsay
Knox	Vacant	C White
All Nations	TW Yoa	RS Ward
Narre Warren	AA Miranda	J Disney †
Ulverstone	Vacant	ID Hamilton

An apology had been received from Mr Glen Hamilton who could not be in attendance until the second session because of work commitments.

Rev Ian Hall was currently giving fulltime supply to Carrum Downs and had been granted a seat on Southern Presbytery. It was resolved that Mr Hall be granted a seat at the court.

4. ASSOCIATION OF DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

Rev Robin Tso introduced delegates from other churches: Rev Andy McCracken of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia and David Lachman of the Southern Presbyterian Church and it was resolved that these brothers be associated with the court. It was further resolved that the Treasurer Elect Mr John Audet be associated with the court. Mr Bob Quinn from AIM was also welcomed to the meeting. The moderator welcomed delegates to the Synod.

5. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Due to Covid 19 Virus restrictions the planned Synod for 2020 could not be held. On 16th June an Extraordinary Meeting was held by video conference to discuss important necessary matters. Minutes were circulated to all members. On 4th August 2020 an Extraordinary Meeting of Synod was called

and held by video conference to hear a dissent and complaint from Rev Dr RS Ward against a decision of Southern Presbytery. Minutes of this meeting were circulated to all members.

It was resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting of Synod held on 16th June 2020.

It was further resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting of Synod held on 4th August 2020 with the modification that Carrum Downs not be included in the list of congregations recorded, and that the name of Ian Hall be included as a presbytery appointment as he was giving full time supply to Carrum Downs.

6. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and read and the session was closed with the singing of Psalm 1 and Mr Muldoon leading in prayer at 6.13pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

R Tso
Moderator

2. TUESDAY 4TH MAY 2021

7.00PM

The session was opened with Mr Kerridge leading in prayer at 7.06pm.

7. MINUTES

The minutes of Session 1 were read and confirmed.

8. ELECTION OF MODERATOR

The Clerk reported that the Rev George Ball had been appointed Moderator-elect. It was moved and seconded that this appointment be confirmed. The motion was carried and Mr Ball took the chair.

9. MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

The court joined in singing praise from Psalm 93. The Moderator read from Acts 15:1-21 and addressed the court under the title: When Conflict Enters the Church. He shared under the four heads of: the dispute that arose, the debate that ensued, the decision that was taken and the deputation that was sent. The Moderator led the court in prayer concluding with the Lord's Prayer. The court joined in praise singing from Psalm 36:5-9. Mr McCallum commented and spoke on the focus of both outgoing and incoming moderator being on Scriptural truth and Christian humility. Mr Ward moved a vote of thanks to the moderator.

10. ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Clerk presented the Administration Committee's Report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Clerk presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Correspondence Item 1 be received and dealt with in the NSW Trust Corporation Report.
2. Correspondence Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 9 be noted.
3. Correspondence Item 6 be received and noted.
4. Correspondence Item 8 be received and considered with the Training of Ministry Report.
5. Correspondence Item 10 and 11 be not received for the following reasons:
 - The language is not respectful.
 - The form is confusing.
 - There are incorrect dates.
 - Much of the content is not relevant to the crave of the petition.
 - There is great potential to injure the peace and harmony of the church.
 - (See Handbook 6.7a).

The committee strongly recommends that aggrieved parties be encouraged to meet face to face, together with the moderator and immediate past moderator, to resolve these matters with a view to a mutually agreed way forward.

6. Correspondence Item 12 be taken with the Finance Committee Report.
7. Synod thanks Rev Trevor Leggott for his services as Synod Clerk from the 1st September 2005 for the last 16 years, and acknowledges his retirement from that role to be effective on 1st September 2021.
8. Synod now appoints Rev David Kerridge to the position of Synod Clerk with that appointment to be effective from the 1st September 2021.
9. Synod resolves that Church Insurances will be included under the oversight of the Superannuation Committee.
10. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery	Mr Hall and Hunter elder.
Central Presbytery	Rev D Kerridge and Knox elder.
Southern Presbytery	Rev R Tso and Brisbane elder.
11. It was resolved that consideration of the Committee Structure be deferred to later in the meeting of Synod on Thursday.
12. That the Synod Clerk no longer be required to collect congregational data for report to Synod.
13. Synod strongly recommends that Committees meet at least twice a year, by video conference if unable to meet in person, and in preference to only communicating by email.

11. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and presented. The court joined in the singing of Psalm 72:17-19 and the Moderator closed the meeting in prayer at 9.00pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

3. WEDNESDAY 5TH MAY 2021 9.00AM

The session was opened with the Moderator leading in prayer at 9.00am. After reading Psalm 26 and sharing on David's relationship with his God, the moderator invited those from Northern Presbytery to lead the court in prayer. Those gathered then sang from Psalm 26.

12.WELCOME OF DELEGATE FROM THE RPCNA BY VIDEO

Mr Tso introduced Rev Bruce Bakensto of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and the Moderator welcomed him to the meeting and it was resolved that he be associated with the court.

13.MINUTES

The minutes of Session 2 were read and confirmed.

14. DECLARATION OF FIDELITY FROM INCOMING CLERK

Mr Kerridge gave the declaration of fidelity as the incoming Clerk of Synod.

15. LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Convener Mr Ward presented the 2020 report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented proposed deliverances and it was resolved:

1. In view of ATO's new procedures delete the words in 3.14a [B.e] being Act of Synod 2018:
3.14e the minister/s and any employees are issued with a PAYG payment summary immediately following 30th June each year and that the PAYG Payment Summary is sent to the Australian Taxation Office.
And replace with:
3.14e The requirements of the Australian Taxation office are followed in regard to reporting taxable stipend payments.
2. Proposed deliverance 2 was rejected.
3. Proposed deliverance 3 was rejected.
4. It is important that Acts of Synod past and present be available and accessible to all interested parties. This is not currently achieved in the Handbook/Decision Book which has limitations and evident gaps. Synod instructs the Law & Advisory committee to consider how this end could be better achieved and to bring proposals to the next ordinary meeting.

The Convener continued and presented the 2021 report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverance relating to the NSW Property Act.

5. NSW Property Act

Synod note that the resolution of Synod 2013 for the NSW Parliament to amend The Synod of Eastern Australia Property Act 1918 cannot be fulfilled under current Government rules. Synod resolved to continue with the 1918 Act and directs the Law & Advisory Committee to provide advice on handling any potential difficulties at its next ordinary meeting.

6. PCEA Safe Church Protocol

The convener presented the proposed resolution as laid out in the 2020 report. The alternate proposal of the 2021 reports was presented by Mr Reeve.

16. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and the meeting was closed in prayer with Ian Hall giving thanks for the meal at 12.30pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

The session was opened at 2.00pm with praise from Psalm 25:4-9 and the Moderator leading in prayer.

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of Session 3 were read and confirmed.

18. LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

PCEA Safe Church Protocol: The two proposals had been presented. On being put to the vote the alternate proposal was preferred. It was resolved as follows:

Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct (2021)

Synod transmit the following overture to Presbyteries under the terms of the Barrier Act and meantime pass the same as an interim act in force until next Synod. Returns are to be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by 30 November 2021:

WHEREAS Synod is committed to the careful development and refining of its Safe Church standards,

AND WHEREAS minor amendments to the 2019 Safe Church Policy and Code were suggested by the Northern Presbytery, and further amendments and additions have been advised by the Law & Advisory committee following its review of state legislation, insurance requirements, and the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse,

NOW THEREFORE Synod, with the consent of presbyteries, enact and ordain, for the PCEA Australia-wide the amendments to the existing Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct (Act 1, Class 1, 2019) as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Law and Advisory Alternative Majority Report 2021.

The Convener continued with the proposed deliverances:

7. Synod strongly commend the use of the Forms A, B, and C attached to the 2020 Report or their substantial equivalent.

19. NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Forbes presented the proposal at it was resolved in favour as follows:

Membership forms: Synod thanks presbyteries for their consideration of this remit noting that no presbytery expressed support for the proposals and two presbyteries were opposed. Synod does not regard such membership forms as necessary, nor is there evidence that they are required by recent State legislation about onus of proof.

The Convener continued with the proposed deliverances:

8. Synod thank all those involved in considered proposals over the past years and especially all the members of the Law and Advisory Committee.

20. NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Forbes presented his motion and it was resolved that:

Synod resolve that the “Head of Entity/Organisation” for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme should, for the time being, be taken as the Clerk of the relevant presbytery. Synod instructs the Law and Advisory Committee to give further consideration to this matter and report back to the next ordinary meeting.

21. LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED DELIVERANCES

Mr Reeve presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved:

1.Complaints Handling Procedures

Synod adopt the Complaints Handling Procedures contained in Appendix 3 of the alternative Law and Advisory Report 2021, as a child focussed and accessible standard to be used throughout the PCEA.

2.Repeal of Act 1, Class 1, 2014:

Synod transmit the following overture to Presbyteries under the terms of the Barrier Act. Returns are to be in the hands of the Clerk of Synod by 30 November 2021:

WHEREAS the Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct contained in Act 1, Class 1, 2014 are not considered to be suitably accessible to children, families and volunteers,
AND WHEREAS all the key constitutional aspects of complaints handling, including requirements for confidentiality, reporting to civil authorities, and disciplinary outcomes are already contained in the PCEA Safe Church Policy,
AND WHEREAS the 2021 Synod has adopted new Complaints Handling Procedures which are more child-focussed and accessible,
NOW THEREFORE Synod repeal Act 1, Class 1, 2014 (Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct).

3. Handbook Changes-Safe Church Matters

Synod instruct the Law & Advisory Committee to draft proposals for the incorporation of Safe Church matters into the Handbook and to bring these proposals for the consideration of Synod at its next meeting.

4. Insurances

It is resolved that all matters relating to church insurances, including the completion of renewal questionnaires and disclosure of relevant confidential information, be placed under the remit of a Synod committee.

Synod adjourned for afternoon tea and resumed with the singing of Psalm 119:9-16 and the Moderator leading in prayer.

22. TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. That the Synod continue in prayer for our Licentiate, Mr Duncan Hickey and his family.

It was resolved that proposed deliverances 2 and 3 be taken when considering Committee Structure.

23. INTERVIEW WITH ZACHARY DOTSON

It was resolved to move into close court. Mr Tso introduced Mr Zachary Dotson by video conference. The Moderator invited Mr Dotson to introduce himself and answer questions. Mr Dotson was excused from the meeting.

24. CORRESPONDENCE ITEM 8

A reference from Southern Presbytery re ministry interest from Mr Zachary Dotson. Mr Ward stated the reference. It was resolved that the reference be received. After discussion and the provision of further information from Ian Hamilton, delegate from Ulverstone, it was resolved to acknowledge the action taken by Southern Presbytery. The Moderator asked Mr Kerridge to lead in prayer.

It was resolved to move into open court.

25. YOUTH & FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Carswell, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Synod recognises the importance of giving special attention to children and youth in the Church and commits to continued prayer for the work of Sunday-school teachers and youth leaders as they serve God in our local congregations.
2. Synod upholds Nic and Amelia O'Dell in prayer as they continue in sending birthday greeting to the children of the church.
3. Synod thanks Irene Steel for her dedication to the scripture search work and acknowledge God's blessing for her commitment and encouragement in continuing this role.

4. In addition to their responsibilities of shepherding God's flock, both young and older, Synod members are asked to encourage church members to participate in future Family Camps and Youth Camps.
5. Members of Synod commit themselves to continued prayer for the spiritual development of the children and youth in our congregations. We are mindful of the temptation of the world and sin that can draw our young people away from the truth of the gospel and the faith. Therefore, constant intercession should be made on behalf of our young people, so that they will have the courage to stand firm in the Lord, to resist worldly pressure, find their identity in fellowship with Christ, and participate joyfully in their local churches.

A number of members spoke of the work and resources being developed for the young people in our church. Mr Glen Hamilton led the court in prayer.

26. NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Tso presented his notice of motion and it was resolved that: Synod ask the Youth and Fellowship Committee to revise the cost for the upcoming church camp, in the light of the change of venue and food cost.

27. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for. The session was closed with the singing of Psalm 62 and Mr Lachman leading in prayer at 5.55pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

5. WEDNESDAY 5TH MAY 2021 7.00PM

The Moderator welcomed visitors and the session was opened at 7.00pm with praise singing from Psalm 87 and the Moderator leading in prayer.

28. MINUTES

It was resolved to defer the reading of the minutes of Session 4 until Session 6.

29. MISSIONS EVENING

The Moderator invited the Convener of the Missions Committee, Mr Muldoon, to introduce the mission speakers. Mr Muldoon introduced the visiting speakers to the Moderator and he invited them to address the court.

Samit Misha, of the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India, brought greetings to the meeting. Pradeep Kumar was unable to be present. He provide commentary on a series of slides which showed something of the desperate situation with the Covid virus in India. Nevertheless the church is continuing to provide ministry through online ministry and service to the local community and the provision of groceries.

They are engaged in discipleship programs, mission outreach, together with a focus on ministry to women, and church planting in new regions.

There were mission schools in two places and they were running online classes during the Covid virus. They had received government support for developing an English language school with ongoing support. They were providing facility for a vaccination centre. He asked for prayer support for the church, church planters, finances, community service, for the poor children losing their schooling because of the pandemic.

After some questions, and expressing thanks to Samit, Mr Greensill committed this work to the Lord in prayer.

A video was shown about the circumstances in India and the work Mariam Hussain is engaged in at the Taleem Centre. She introduced her brother who shared about the critically desperate situation with the Covid virus.

Mariam then shared and thanked the PCEA for their ongoing support. She spoke of the challenges and opportunities of her ministry and the time taken in travel to and from the Taleem Centre. The centre had been closed until March because of the virus restrictions. Infection rates were low in the local villages because of the isolation. A good farm is being rented for the provision of fresh food. She asked especially for prayer for India. Mr Steel led the meeting in prayer for India and especially for Mariam, Shekinah and Zechariah in their ongoing work for the Kingdom of God.

Shekinah shared short videos relating to her planned video ministry and then spoke about her delayed plans to go to Thailand. She is looking to work online from home and learn Thai at the moment. She shared about Project Video as a means of Bible teaching and ethnic outreach. Ian Miller led the court in prayer for Shekinah and her ministry.

The meeting joined in praise singing Psalm 100.

Bob Quinn shared about his work as a Pioneers Missionary seconded to work with AIM. Bob shared about Bimbadeen, a property at Cootamundra, once a government girl's school for Aboriginal children.

Children were taken from their families, schooled and trained as domestics from 1912 to 1972. From 1979 the Aboriginal Christian Fellowship began to train church leaders there. A group of Coota girls wanted to use the property for smoking and healing ceremonies. Bimbadeen offered it to this group so they were without a property, and developed a funding model to provide money for the college to empower, educate equip and exhort Aboriginal leadership and to fund ministry. This was for Aboriginal people to reach their own people with the Gospel.

Bob shared some of his personal family story relating to how Aboriginal people were treated years ago and why many had forsaken their heritage. Mr Klazinga led the meeting in prayer.

Mr Muldoon introduced Mark and Rahel Landrum to the Moderator and invited them to speak about the ministry of International Mission to Jewish People (formerly Christian Witness to Israel). They showed a short personal video presentation about Gospel ministry to the Jews. Mark and Rahel spoke of their personal ministry and the Jewish view of Jesus.

30. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and the session was closed with Mr Leggott leading in prayer at 9.25pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

6.

THURSDAY 6TH MAY 2021

9.00AM

The session was opened with the Moderator leading in prayer. He read from Psalm 28 and shared on the focus on urgent prayer, with empty hands pleading for mercy and grace, seeking the presence of the Lord. David prayed for himself; he prayed for his enemies; he prayed for the Anointed, the Lord Jesus; he prayed for the church. Members of Southern Presbytery were invited to lead in prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

The Moderator welcomed Rev David Waldron of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand and he was associated with the court.

31. MINUTES

The minutes of Session 4 and 5 were read and confirmed.

32. MISSIONS

The Convener, Mr Muldoon, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved:

1. 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 Synod approve a subcommittee consisting of John Greensill (chair), David Kerridge and Alex Steel to manage the sponsorship/donation scheme for students at the Mission Higher Secondary School, Chhapara, India.
4. That Synod adopt the Missions Committee Budget 2021/22 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for this period.

33. DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

Mr Tso introduced Rev Bruce Bakensto of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America who brought the greetings of the church. He asked for prayer for the meeting of the upcoming church Synod. He spoke of the seminary and asked for prayer for those in leadership there. There are eleven vacancies in the church, together with a need for teaching and ruling elders in mission work. The ministry works in China are progressing well with a plan for a locally founded church. A mission work is opening up in Pakistan and there is a work in India. A new work is being founded in Chilli. Bruce asked for prayer for the church and the difficulties of the pandemic. Bruce spoke of the increasing pressure that immoral government regulations are having on the church. Bruce hopes to come to Australia with his wife for a visit next year. Mr Ward led the meeting in prayer.

Mr Tso introduced David Waldron for the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. David brought the greetings of the church and the church relations committee. David shared about the confessional base of the church reflecting the historical background of the church. They are members of the ICRC and recognise this organisation as a means to meet and share with like-minded churches. They have 23 congregations with 19 ministers, 3 presbyteries and 3,300 members. Their Synod is to meet from 11th -17th September 2021. Six men have been ordained in the last year. There are six students for the ministry with another three men looking to begin studies. They are looking to develop their mission focus in Papua New Guinea and with an interest in work in Myanmar. Mr Klazinga led the meeting in prayer.

34. INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

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. It was resolved that:

“The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA) recognises in the Free Church of Scotland Continuing (FCC) a church whose doctrines and contentings are largely similar to its own with adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith a major requirement for office bearers. Synod, while declining to enter into the merits or otherwise of the division in the Free Church of Scotland in 2000, reaffirms the approval of mutual eligibility approved by PCEA Synod 2019 and notes that the FCC General Assembly in May 2019 the FCC reaffirmed the relation established by the pre-2000 Free Church of Scotland.

The Synod of the PCEA understands and is satisfied that FCC Presbyteries may issue calls to ministers of the PCEA, and likewise affirms the right of the PCEA Presbyteries to process calls to FCC ministers. In neither case does this mutual eligibility impinge on the right and responsibility of the relevant FCC or PCEA Presbytery to require the usual application for admission to be fully and satisfactorily completed and full and satisfactory Presbyterial certificates of character and attainment before admission. These include clearance under any relevant child protection legislation, and assurance that any incoming minister is familiar with the history, doctrine, and practice of the church so that he is able to subscribe to the formula of subscription intelligently and heartily and participate harmoniously and constructively in the life of the church.

The other presbyteries should be promptly advised of a proposed invitation.

Where a FCC minister is potentially or actually under call or appointment by the PCEA, he must, *inter alia*, (a) have read the history of the PCEA and also its Handbook of Practice and Procedure, and have answered satisfactorily questions on them; (b) assure the presbytery that he will maintain the simplicity and purity of the PCEA form of worship; and (c) answer satisfactorily concerning his adherence to the teaching of the Confession of Faith as per Formula of Subscription. His satisfactory compliance with this admission procedure is to be minuted by the Presbytery and must be met before a call or invitation is transmitted so that the minister may know that his acceptance will enable his admission.”

This Act may be cited as Mutual Eligibility (Free Church of Scotland Continuing) 2021.

3. It was resolved that the words “*The other presbyteries should be promptly advised of a proposed invitation, and any response by them should be given without delay.*” be inserted in the mutual Eligibility Acts with the FCS, OPC and RCNZ.

35. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and the session was closed with the Moderator leading in prayer at 12.42pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

7. THURSDAY 6TH MAY 2021 1.45PM

The session was opened with the singing of praise from Psalm 44:1-8 and Mr Forbes leading in prayer.

36. MINUTES

The minutes of Session 6 were read and confirmed.

37. REPORTS OF EXAMINERS OF RECORDS

The minutes of the Northern Presbytery for 2019-21 were reported to be in order. The minutes of Central Presbytery for 2019-21 were reported to be in order. The minutes of Southern Presbytery for 2019-21 were reported to be in order. It was resolved that the reports be received and the records attested.

38. DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES (CONTINUED)

Mr Tso introduced Rev Andy McCracken from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia and he brought the greetings of his church. There was a desire to revitalise and evaluate the work in Victoria. The church in Frankston had only been able to meet three times in the past year because of the pandemic. Andy had been using video technology for services but this has now ceased. There is a real need for strong and skilled labourers who can develop relationship with unbelievers, a desire to reach the lost, a willingness to bring people in, and a desire to bring in young people, and a need for prayer. They were wrestling with the issues of the function of officers as managers as opposed to deacons. They recognised the need for work on their Book of Church Discipline. There are two students for the ministry. Mr Kerridge led the meeting in prayer.

Mr Tso introduced Rev David Lachman of the Southern Presbyterian Church and he brought a greeting from the SPC. David shared about the difficulties of the pandemic and that each one has their own trials and troubles. He noted the reference to the churches in Revelation and that the Lord will enable his people to overcome these things. There is a strong desire to revitalise the work in Launceston coupled with a desire to see men raised up to take on the ministry of the Word. David shared that he had been blessed by the time of fellowship in our midst. Mr Ian Hamilton led the meeting in prayer.

The Clerk read a letter of greeting from Dr John Ferguson, Convener of the Church Relations Committee of the Associated Presbyterian Church.

Mr Tso presented a video from Rev Iver Martin of the Free Church of Scotland and the Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Mr Martin brought the greetings of the Church and expressed the trials of recent times but recognising that, with things like on line presentations, there are new opportunities opening up.

There are church planting exercises with expectation to plant 30 churches by 2030. They are encouraged by the quality of the students, believing that God is calling people into ministry and mission work. The Moderator led the court in prayer.

39. NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr White proposed the following and it was resolved to:

Replace Section 9 (p13), bullet point 1 of the Safe Church Policy (2021) with: Applicants must be members of the congregation who have been regular attenders for at least one year (Less time approved only if they are well attested from another approved congregation with at least two referee's reports).

40. PRESBYTERY REPORTS

The report of Northern Presbytery was presented. After comment from Mr Kerridge it was resolved that the report be received. Mr McIntosh led the court in prayer.

The Moderator Mr Ball stepped down to present the report of Central Presbytery and Mr Tso took the chair. The report of Central Presbytery was presented. After comment from Mr Ball it was resolved that the report be received. Mr Yoa led the court in prayer. The Moderator returned to the chair.

The report of Southern Presbytery was presented. After comment from Mr Ward it was resolved that the report be received. Mr Leggott led the court in prayer.

41. ADJOURNMENT OF SYNOD

It was resolved to adjourn the meeting early for an opportunity for conference in relation to resolution 21.10.5 above: Re Southern Presbytery business: That aggrieved parties be encouraged to meet face to face, together with the moderator and immediate past moderator, to resolve these matters with a view to a mutually agreed way forward.

42. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and the session was closed with Mr Leggott leading in prayer at 3.30pm.

8. THURSDAY 6TH MAY 2021

7.00PM

The session was opened at 7.00pm with the singing of Psalm 98 and the Moderator leading in prayer.

43. MINUTES

The minutes of Session 7 were read and confirmed.

44. CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Ball, vacated the Moderator's chair to present the report. Mr Tso took the chair. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Synod prays for the spiritual well-being of our nation that men and women will seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near (Isa. 55:6).
2. Synod urges members to pray for the reformation and revival of the church and nation. The principle stated in 2 Chron. 7: 14 is 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'.
3. Synod affirms the Bible's teaching that every human being is made in the image of God (Gen. 9:6); that everyone is descended from Adam and Eve (Acts 17:26 and Romans 5:12); that everyone irrespective of the colour of skin is deserving of honour and should be treated with dignity and respect.
4. Synod regrets the passing in Victoria of the, '**Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020**'. Synod recognises that the passing of this Bill will have significant effects on religious freedom. Synod affirms that the Bible is a book about transformation, about how God can set people free and make them into new persons with new desires (2 Cor. 5:17). Synod recognises that because Christians are often at the forefront of offering help in this area they should therefore be prepared to suffer for their faith (1 Peter 2: 20-21).
5. Synod records its sorrow at the eagerness of States to legalise euthanasia. Synod affirms that God's Word commands us not to take our own lives, or the life of another human being, as we are made in the image of God (Exodus 20:13, Genesis 9:6).
6. Synod awaits with some apprehension the release of the Religious Discrimination Bill. Synod reminds rulers of their responsibility, 'to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good' (1 Peter 2:14).
7. Synod records it's thanks to the editor of the Presbyterian Banner, Rev. Jim Klazinga, for producing an attractive and informative magazine, and resolves to pray for him in his ongoing work and for the witness of the magazine.
8. Synod records it's thanks to Rev. David Kerridge for his oversight of the website during another year.
9. Synod records its appreciation to Rev. Jim Klazinga for encouraging members to pray by sending daily prayer texts.

Mr Ball returned to the Moderator's chair.

45. THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER REPORT

The Editor, Mr Klazinga, presented the report and it was resolved that the report be received. The Editor presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Synod continues to endorse the Presbyterian Banner as the official magazine of the PCEA, and encourages members and adherents to read it and contribute material to it.
2. Synod expresses thankfulness for the assistance of the Presbyterian Banner liaisons from each of the congregations and encourages them to continue in this work.
3. Synod supports the continuation of printing and mailing paper copies of the magazine, along with continuing to make pdf copies of the magazine available.

46. WEBSITE

The Convener, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved:

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.
2. That the rollout of PCEA Intranet and Microsoft 365 online workplace be authorized for all Synod members and the offer extended to all Church courts.

47. ARCHIVIST

Mr Ward reported on the storage of material and noted some property title detail that would be further explored.

48. DELEGATE FROM THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING)

Mr Tso introduced Rev William Macleod and it was resolved that he be associated. Mr Macleod brought the greeting of the FCC and noted some long term connections with folk in Australia. They have 41 ministers, 14 of whom are retired, and 25 congregations. There is 1 in Northern Ireland and 5 in North America. There is mission work in Spain and Southern France. A college started in Zambia has been handed over to local trustees. There is support for an indigenous work in Sri Lanka. They produce the magazine the Free Church Witness and a young people's magazine. There has been some decline in the church with the increase in secularism in Scotland but the church presses on optimistically and faithfully looking for the Lord's blessing. A number of members extended their greetings to Mr Macleod. Mr Steel led the meeting in prayer.

49. PSALMODY COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Klazinga, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Synod gives thanks for the high level of enthusiasm for exclusive psalmody among many in our churches.
2. Synod encourages the sessions, working with their precentors, to consider what they can do to continuously improve the singing of the psalms in their congregations.
3. Synod resolves that the psalmody committee structure be altered, so that it is made up of five full members. Sessions of all the congregations not represented on the committee will appoint a liaison to the committee. Should a session not appoint a liaison, the minister / interim moderator will be the default liaison.
4. Synod instructs the psalmody committee to discuss whether a single common psalter is needed in our denomination, and to make recommendations on this matter to Synod 2022.

Tut Yoa shared the difficulty in providing Psalms for singing in the Nuer language. It was resolved that this matter be taken up by Southern Presbytery to provide constructive help.

50. CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and read and the session was closed with Rev Tut Yoa leading in the singing of Psalm 100 in Nuer, and Mr Ball leading in prayer at 9.08pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

9. FRIDAY 7TH MAY 2021 9.00AM

The session was opened with the Moderator leading in prayer and the reading of Psalm 29 at 9.00am. He then spoke of this Psalm calling all to give praise and glory due to the Lord. The voice of the Lord is as a storm passing over the land, all powerful and sweeping all before it, a picture of what the Lord will do on the day of judgement. The Psalm concludes with the Lord sitting as king forever, almighty and all powerful. This God has also been reconciled to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is able to save his people and give them peace. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ being presented to us: the Word of God. The Moderator invited those of Central Presbytery to lead in prayer and meeting joined in the singing of Psalm 29.

51. MINUTES

The minutes of Session 8 were read and confirmed

52. SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented proposed deliverance 1:

1. Synod approves the committee's proposal for changes in Section C in the reports, starting from 1/7/21.

53. NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Glen Hamilton presented the proposed alternate to resolution 1:

Synod approve the committee's proposal for changes in Section C in the reports, but that the contribution rate for inducted ministers to remain at 16% starting from the 1/7/21.

On being put to the vote the proposed deliverance was preferred. It was resolved in favour of proposed deliverance 1 above.

The Convener proceeded with proposed deliverance 2 and it was resolved that:

2. 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.

54. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Alex Steel, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. We record our thanks to God for temporal blessings granted especially during the time of global Pandemic restrictions during 2020.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2021/2022 be made on 1st January annually in line with the movement in the *Wage Price Index* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any review period, no adjustment be made.
3. Stipend Assistance of up to \$ 12,500 for 2021/2022 Synodical year be granted to the Hawkesbury-Nepean Deacons' Courts as follows:
 - Be strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
 - Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1st January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
 - Be subject to the availability of funds.

55. CORRESPONDENCE ITEM 12

Overture from St Georges congregation regarding the estate of the late Peter McIntosh Martin. Mr Steel presented the overture and it was resolved that the prayer of the overture be granted in the following terms:

Synod grants approval for St Georges Deacons' Court to hold and administer \$180,000 of the \$212,172.18 currently held on account of the bequest received from the executor (NSW Trustee & Guardian) of the estate of the late Peter McIntosh Martin. The balance of \$32,172.18 (including accrued interest of \$19,291.47 earned since 21/11/2019 thereon) to be applied to the Synod of Eastern Australia *General Fund*.

56. SYNOD ADMINISTRATION COSTS

Notice of Motion: The Treasurer presented the proposal and it was received and further resolved that:

50% of the cost of each Synod be borne by Synod General Funds and Handbook *Synod Administration Costs* (Page 98) be amended as follows:

Synod Administration Costs: [Synod 1995 (Minutes, Article 95.36.4)]

50% of the cost of each Synod be borne by Synod General Funds. The cost (on a per commissioner basis) be advised by the General Treasurer after each Synod to Deacons' Courts and Presbyteries. This amount to be remitted to the General Treasurer by 30th June by Deacons' Courts for the number of congregational representatives who attended Synod and by presbyteries for ministers who do not represent a congregation. In the case where a charge is not represented at the Synod, that Deacons' Court to make a contribution at the rate of one commissioner. Synod host congregation being exempted.

The Treasurer reported on the cost of this current Synod is \$8876.00 without the cost of food. This would be \$467 per commissioner. Synod would now pay half so cost per commissioner would be about \$234.

57. GENERAL TREASURER'S REPORT

The General Treasurer, Mr Steel, presented his report. It was resolved that the report be received.

58. NOTICE OF MOTION RE SYNOD BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES

The Treasurer presented his notice of motion and it was received and resolved that:

Authorised signatories to operate Synod's bank account(s), including Bendigo Bank e-banking, be any two of Trevor I Leggott (Clerk), David J Kerridge (Clerk Elect), John G Audet (Treasurer Elect), D Peter Smith (Assistant Treasurer) and Alex H Steel (Treasurer).

59. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The meeting took up consideration of the Committee Structure.

60. NOTION OF MOTION RE MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Mr Muldoon presented his notice of motion and it was resolved that the Mission Committee be: DK Muldoon (Convener), JD Klazinga, J Greensill, ID Hamilton and R Tso.

After discussion it was resolved that Committee Structure be as follows:

Administration: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Presbytery Clerks.

Law and Advisory: T Reeve (Convener), RS Ward, T Leggott, D Kerridge, J Forbes.

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

Church and Nation and Publication: GD Ball (Convener), DK Muldoon, I Hall, J Klazinga (Banner).

Information Technology: D Kerridge (Convener), R Tso, C White.

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

Finance: J Audet (Convener), AH Steel, DJ Ramsay, DE Kerr, G Hamilton.

Superannuation: R Tso (Convener), RS Ward, DJ Ramsay, A Steel.

Missions: DK Muldoon (Convener), ID Hamilton, JD Klazinga, J Greensill, R Tso.

Training of Ministry: D Kerridge (Convener), AA Miranda, R Tso, ID Hamilton, G Hamilton.

Psalmody: D Kerridge (Convener), DA McIntosh, GD Ball, Julie Schmidt, Esther Hamilton.

61. NSW TRUST CORPORATION

The Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Trustees. It was resolved that the report be received.

The Clerk presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved that Synod gives thanks to God for the generosity of the late Mrs Margaret Isabel Hockett and meets now to discuss the use of this bequest.

CORRESPONDENCE ITEM 1

A letter from Priest Legal regarding the Estate of the late Margaret Hockett was noted.

62. NOTICES OF MOTION

Re the estate of the late Margaret Isabel Hockett. The Treasurer presented the proposed motions and they were received. It was resolved as follows:

1. The bequest of \$794,669.29 received from the Estate of the late Margaret Isabel Hockett be applied to Synod General Funds.
2. A donation of \$10,000 be made from the Synod General to Annie Soper Christian School, Moyobamba, Peru. The funds to be applied as the school wishes.

It was further resolved:

In an endeavour to maintain *Real Value* (keep up with inflation) in the bequest received from the Estate of the late Margaret Isabel Hockett, \$200,000 be invested in equities and reviewed annually. Such investment be made in similar terms as relate to investment of Synod Capital Funds as detailed in *Trust Corporations - Synod Investments (B TRUSTEES)* Investment of Synod Funds. Handbook – *Classified Decisions of Synod* (2019 Page 102)

It was further resolved that:

Synod make an ex gratia payment of \$4,000 to the Hastings River Congregation in memory of the late Margaret Isabel Hockett noting her long and faithful contribution to the ministry of the gospel in the Charge. The funds may be applied as the Deacons' Court decides.

Mr Ward led the court in prayer, giving thanks for the life of the Margaret Hockett and her husband, and her generosity in the desire to support the work of the church.

63. HOLDING OF DEED BOX

In recent years the Deed Box has been held at a solicitor's office in Taree. With the change of Synod Clerk it was resolved that the Deed Box be relocated and held secure by Daniel Butt and Co. Solicitors of Maclean, under the care of the newly appointed Clerk of Synod Rev David Kerridge, along with a Maclean elder, being appointed key holders and auditors of the content.

64. QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION

The Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Trustees. It was resolved that the report be received.

65. THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA

Mr Ward (Secretary) presented the report on behalf of the Trustees. It was resolved that the report be received. Mr Ward presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved that:

1. Synod extend the appointment of RS Ward until 30th June 2022 and appoint Wesley Ian Hall as Trustee and Secretary for an initial period of 5 years commencing 1/9/2021 to be reviewed no later Synod 2026.

66. MODERATOR-ELECT FOR SYNOD 2022

The Clerk nominated Rev Andres Miranda. It was resolved that Mr Miranda be appointed Moderator-elect for Synod 2022 subject to his approval.

67. TIME AND PLACE OF SYNOD 2022

The Clerk reported that the Hunter congregation had offered to host the meeting of Synod again for 2022. It was resolved that Synod meet for the next ordinary meeting from 4.30pm on Tuesday 3rd May 2022 to 12.30pm on Friday 6th May 2022.

68. THANKS

The Moderator called on the retiring Treasurer to come forward and expressed the thanks of Synod to Alex for his long service as Synod Treasurer. Alex responded expressing his thanks to the Court.

The Moderator called on the retiring Clerk to come forward and expressed the thanks of Synod to Trevor for his service as Synod Clerk. Trevor thanked the Court and expressed his best wishes and prayerful support of the incoming Clerk.

The Moderator reported on the meeting that had taken place between brothers in Southern Presbytery and that there had been positive progress made to resolution of issues. The Moderator thanked the delegates for their help and encouragement and cooperation and brotherly love expressed.

The Moderator was thanked for his leading of the meetings and for his devotional messages.

69. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of this closing Session 9 were read and confirmed.

70. CLOSURE OF SYNOD 2021

Synod 2021 concluded with praise, singing from Psalm 121 and with the Moderator leading in prayer at 1.54pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

GD Ball
Moderator

ACTS OF SYNOD 2021
Appended by the Direction of Synod (09.50)

Class 1 (Barrier Act Procedure)

No	Act	Reference
1	Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct	21.18
2	Repeal of Act 1, Class 1, 2014 Re Child Safety Procedures	21.21.2

Class 2 (Others)

No	Act	Reference
1	Changes to ATO Reporting	21.15.1
2	Improvement to Recording Acts of Synod	21.16.4
3	Remit to L&A Committee re Handling Any Issues re NSW Property Act	21.15.5
4	Head of Entity for Reportable Conduct: Presbytery Clerks	21.20
5	Complaints Handling Procedure	21.21.1
6	Handbook Changes: Safe Church Matters	21.21.3
7	Mission Subcommittee to Handle Sponsorship for Chhapara High School	21.32.3
8	Mutual Eligibility (Free Church of Scotland Continuing) 2021	21.34.2
9	Membership of Psalmody Committee	21.49.3

10	Changes to Superannuation Level	21.52.1
11	Minimum Stipend Levels	21.54.2
12	Stipend Assistance Hawkesbury Nepean	21.54.3
13	Holding of Peter McIntosh Martin Estate	21.55
14	Re Estate of Margaret Isabel Hockett	21.62
15	Holding of Deed Box	21.63
16	Trustees fro Victoria	21.65.1