

# The Synod of Eastern Australia

MINUTES  
OF THE 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
RAYMOND TERRACE, NSW, 2<sup>ND</sup> TO 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2023

## Table of Contents

|                |  |           |
|----------------|--|-----------|
| <b>23.2.1</b>  | <b>OPENING .....</b>                                       | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>23.2.2</b>  | <b>MODERATOR'S SERMON .....</b>                            | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>23.2.3</b>  | <b>ROLLS OF PRESBYTERY .....</b>                           | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>23.2.4</b>  | <b>ASSOCIATION OF DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES.....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>23.2.5</b>  | <b>ELECTION OF MODERATOR.....</b>                          | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>23.2.6</b>  | <b>MODERATOR'S ADDRESS.....</b>                            | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>23.2.7</b>  | <b>ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE .....</b>                      | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>23.2.8</b>  | <b>SPC DELEGATE'S ADDRESS.....</b>                         | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>23.2.9</b>  | <b>LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE .....</b>                    | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>23.2.10</b> | <b>TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE.....</b>                 | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>23.2.11</b> | <b>RPCA and OPC DELEGATES' ADDRESSES .....</b>             | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>23.2.12</b> | <b>YOUTH AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE .....</b>                | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>23.2.13</b> | <b>SUPERANNUATION (and INSURANCE) COMMITTEE.....</b>       | <b>10</b> |
| <b>23.2.14</b> | <b>FINANCE COMMITTEE.....</b>                              | <b>10</b> |
| <b>23.2.15</b> | <b>GENERAL TREASURER.....</b>                              | <b>11</b> |
| <b>23.2.16</b> | <b>NSW TRUST CORPORATION .....</b>                         | <b>11</b> |
| <b>23.2.17</b> | <b>QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION .....</b>                  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>23.2.18</b> | <b>VICTORIAN TRUST CORPORATION .....</b>                   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>23.2.19</b> | <b>CRCA DELEGATE'S ADDRESS.....</b>                        | <b>11</b> |
| <b>23.2.20</b> | <b>CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE .....</b>                   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>23.2.21</b> | <b>THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER REPORT .....</b>                | <b>13</b> |
| <b>23.2.22</b> | <b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE .....</b>              | <b>13</b> |
| <b>23.2.23</b> | <b>PSALMODY COMMITTEE.....</b>                             | <b>13</b> |
| <b>23.2.24</b> | <b>APC and AFC DELEGATES' ADDRESSES.....</b>               | <b>14</b> |
| <b>23.2.25</b> | <b>INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE.....</b>               | <b>15</b> |
| <b>23.2.26</b> | <b>RPCNA and RPCI DELEGATE'S ADDRESSES .....</b>           | <b>15</b> |
| <b>23.2.27</b> | <b>PRESBYTERY REPORTS.....</b>                             | <b>15</b> |
|                | <b>NORTHERN PRESBYTERY .....</b>                           | <b>15</b> |
|                | <b>CENTRAL PRESBYTERY.....</b>                             | <b>15</b> |
|                | <b>SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY.....</b>                            | <b>16</b> |
| <b>23.2.28</b> | <b>REPORTS OF EXAMINERS OF RECORDS.....</b>                | <b>17</b> |
| <b>23.2.29</b> | <b>ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT .....</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>23.2.30</b> | <b>MISSIONS COMMITTEE.....</b>                             | <b>18</b> |

|                |  |           |
|----------------|--|-----------|
| <b>23.2.31</b> | <b>COMMITTEE STRUCTURE</b> .....                           | <b>20</b> |
| <b>23.2.32</b> | <b>MODERATOR-ELECT</b> .....                               | <b>21</b> |
| <b>23.2.33</b> | <b>TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT SYNOD</b> .....                  | <b>21</b> |
| <b>23.2.34</b> | <b>MISSIONS EVENING SPEAKERS - PFCCI</b> .....             | <b>21</b> |
| <b>23.2.35</b> | <b>SUPPLEMENTARY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT</b> ..... | <b>22</b> |
| <b>23.2.36</b> | <b>CAUSES</b> .....  | <b>22</b> |
|                | PETITION FROM REV. TREVOR LEGGOTT .....                    | 22        |
|                | MEMORIAL FROM MEMBERS OF KNOX CONGREGATION .....           | 23        |
|                | LETTER TO THE MODERATOR FROM REV. WILLIAM MACKAY.....      | 23        |
| <b>23.2.37</b> | <b>THANKS</b> .....  | <b>24</b> |
| <b>23.2.38</b> | <b>CLOSURE OF SYNOD</b> .....                              | <b>24</b> |

**SESSION 1****TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2023****4:30PM****23.2.1 OPENING**

Within the Raymond Terrace Church building of the Hunter Congregation, on Tuesday 2nd May 2023, at 4.30pm, the Synod of Eastern Australia met. The Moderator, Rev Trevor Leggott, took the chair, and extended a welcome. Those gathered joined in praise, singing and reading from Psalm 12. The Moderator constituted the meeting, leading in prayer.

**23.2.2 MODERATOR'S SERMON**

The Moderator preached on Psalm 12 as a complaint for our own day. Evil is good and good, evil. Truth has been turned upside down. The talk of people is cheap and cheapened: empty, deceitful, flattering and self-righteous. Sin is ignored. There is threat of oppression against Christians. The cry of the Psalmist and each faithful one today is to the Lord, simple and desperate. The Lord will act in His time and His word will prevail. Our prayer must be for help in the midst of this generation.

Mr Klazinga proposed a vote of thanks to the Moderator for his timely address and moved a motion that the talk be reprinted in *The Presbyterian Banner*.

**23.2.3 ROLLS OF PRESBYTERY**

The Certified Rolls of Presbyteries were tendered. Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of those marked † below. Members marked # attend online.

| <b>Northern Presbytery</b> | <b>Ministers</b> | <b>Commissioned Elders</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Brisbane                   | JD Klazinga      | S Carswell                 |
| Hastings River             | J Forbes         | G Hamilton                 |
| Northern Rivers            | DJ Kerridge      | J Greensill                |
| <b>Central Presbytery</b>  |                  |                            |
| Manning                    | GD Ball          | TI Leggott                 |
| Hunter                     | R Tso            | AH Steel                   |
| Sydney West                | DK Muldoon       | T Reeve                    |
| St George's                | [vacant]         | D McIntosh                 |
| <b>Southern Presbytery</b> |                  |                            |
| All Nations                | TW Yoa #         | I John #                   |
| Geelong                    | [vacant]         | D Ramsay                   |
| Knox                       | [vacant]         | J Lee †                    |
| Narre Warren               | AA Miranda       | T Buck #                   |
| Ulverstone                 | [vacant]         | I Hamilton                 |

Presbytery Appointment

I Hall (Carrum Downs)

Mr Zach Dotson, PCEA Candidate, currently supplying in Ulverstone, was welcomed by the Moderator.

### **23.2.4 ASSOCIATION OF DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES**

Rev Robin Tso introduced delegates from other churches: Rev. Bruce Bakensto from RPCNA; Mr Stuart Coles, SPC; Rev. Laurens Nel, CRCA; Rev. John Ferguson, APC, Scotland; Rev. Andrew Stewart, RPC, Australia. Others will arrive this evening. Online: Mr J Terpstra, OPC. It was moved seconded and carried that these men be associated with the court. The Moderator advised them of the conditions of association. The Moderator welcomed delegates to the Synod.

Mr John Audet, General Treasurer, was welcomed by the Moderator (automatically associated to speak regarding matters of finance as per Handbook 5.9).

### **CLOSURE OF SESSION**

The session was closed with prayer by Mr Klazinga at 5:20pm

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

TI Leggott  
Moderator

## **SESSION 2**

**TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2023**

**7:00PM**

The Session was opened with prayer at 7:00pm by Mr Tso. The Moderator advised the Court that Rev. Kenneth MacLeod had died in Maclean Hospital in the late afternoon.

### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of Session 1 were read and confirmed.

### **23.2.5 ELECTION OF MODERATOR**

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

### **23.2.6 MODERATOR'S ADDRESS**

The Moderator delivered his opening address. He spoke on the nature of fellowship in the church in the light of our social being, our moral obligation and the command to love. Our proximity within congregations demands labour to include the outlier. We are to evidence our profession by displaying love and inclusion. The address closed with the singing of Ps 113.

Mr Klazinga moved a vote of thanks for his address and moved that it be reproduced in *The Presbyterian Banner*

### **23.2.7 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 Items 1 and 2 be received and dealt with following the Training of Ministry Report.
2. Correspondence Item 3 be received in terms of a dissent from Rev. Tut Yoa against the deposition of Dr Ward.
3. Correspondence items 4, 6 and 7. (Letter from W. Mackay) be taken with Causes as usual at the end of Standing Committee business.

Noting the time (8:40pm), Mr Tso moved that Standing Orders be suspended. It was seconded and carried.

4. Correspondence item 5 be received and noted.
5. Synod resolved to defer the Committee Structure to the close of business.
6. The following Examiners of Records be appointed:

|                     |                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Northern Presbytery | Rev. I Hall and Hunter Elder      |
| Central Presbytery  | Rev. J Klazinga and Geelong Elder |
| Southern Presbytery | Rev. R Tso and Brisbane Elder     |

7. Synod incorporate the following Memorial Minute for Rev. Raymond Murray in the permanent record.

#### **Memorial Minute**

The Rev. Raymond William Murray October 7, 1941 – July 7, 2022

On the 7th October, 1941, a son was born to Sam and Alacoque Murray of Nabitac in New South Wales. He was given the names Raymond William and was the youngest of six children. The family moved to Bunyah and Ray grew up there under the ministry of the Rev. M.C. Ramsay. All his life he retained a strong love of Bunyah and it was one of his great joys in his retirement to return there from time to time.

Ray was received as a student for the ministry in 1961 and commenced studying at the University of Newcastle, graduating with a BA degree in 1964. He then proceeded to Scotland to the Free Church College in Edinburgh, where he studied from 1964-67. A defining event of Ray's life also occurred during this spell in Scotland – he met Roberta MacPherson and they were married in 1967. In that year they went to the United States where Ray had enrolled at the Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa. under the supervision of Cornelius van Til. Some years later he submitted a thesis on this work and was awarded the degree of Master of Theology.

On his return to Australia in 1968, Ray was called to the ministry of the St. Kilda Congregation in Melbourne, where he served faithfully until 1972, when he received and accepted a call to the Brisbane Congregation which had been formed a few years earlier. During their time in Melbourne, the Murray family was increased by the arrival of their first child, their daughter Susan. As the first minister of the new Brisbane congregation Ray was a driving force in its development and growth over those formative years. Never afraid of hard work, he almost single-handedly dug out tons of heavy clay from under the manse to develop a room where the congregation could meet for mid-week

Bible studies, etc. (the congregation was worshipping in rented premises at the time). During his time in Brisbane, he also negotiated with the Queensland Government the Incorporation of the PCEA in the State of Queensland.

During the Murrays' time in Brisbane they took leave of absence to visit Scotland in 1975 and then returned there again on a period of Long Service Leave in late 1980, this time as a family of four, Jonathan having arrived in that same year. During their time in Scotland, Ray received and accepted a call to the Glenurquhart congregation of the Free Church of Scotland, where he remained until 1983. After returning to Australia in 1983, Ray served as the minister, firstly, of the Grafton-Lismore congregation. He then served for a short period as the minister of both the Grafton-Lismore congregation and the Maclean congregation and, finally, when these had been combined to form the Northern Rivers congregation, he accepted the call to be its minister.

During his time as the minister of Grafton, Ray also worked as a teacher of Religious Education in the South Grafton High School. He also, at various times, taught Religion in several other schools. We cannot know how many young lives he influenced during that time.

During his ministry Ray made a large contribution to the work of the Church. Over the years he was Moderator of Synod three times (1979, 1987 and 2002), Assistant Clerk of Synod, Clerk of the Northern Presbytery, and Editor of the Presbyterian Banner (1970-72; 1987-8), as well as convening various Synod committees, notably the Training of Ministry Committee. His knowledge of church law and procedures was encyclopaedic and so he was well equipped to perform these tasks. He had a keen mind and an incisive reasoning power – a worthy pupil of the great van Til!

In his retirement, and even after the onset of that illness to which he finally succumbed, Ray worked for His Lord, taking services wherever there was a need. His last sermon was preached in Wauchope at the morning service on the 26th August, 2018. He became ill during the service but managed to complete his sermon. It was preached on 2 Chronicles 24:16. He finished by saying we should all aspire to be like Jehoiada and that in due time we will hear these words, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord”. What an appropriate end to a long and faithful ministry! Now he is hearing those words himself!  
Our deepest sympathy goes to Roberta, to Susan and Jonathan and to their families.

### **Supplementary Report**

It was resolved that the Administration Committee Supplementary Report be received prior to the presentation of causes on Friday morning. The Report is reproduced here for reference:

**Petition from Rev. Trevor Leggott:** The committee recommends that the petition not be received as it attempts to reopen a final disciplinary decision without providing any significant new information or evidence to justify such a request.

**Memorial:** A memorial is a type of petition and the rules for petitions apply. A number of problems with the form and content of this memorial are noted:

1. It claims to represent views of non-signatories.
2. It claims to be a submission from the “Knox congregation” but no congregational meeting was held.
3. Its numbered sections are often unnecessarily long containing several separate paragraphs as well as some information irrelevant to the prayer of the memorial.
4. It is not competent for Synod to overturn a final disciplinary decision unless significant new information or evidence is brought to light.

Nevertheless, the Administration committee recognises that the memorialists are not familiar with church procedure and that it would be appropriate in the circumstances to receive the memorial in order to allow them opportunity to be heard.



‘Breaking the Silence’ 2020 programme to be undertaken in presbytery or congregational groups once every three years, with local refresher sessions in other years. New teachers, once appointed by sessions, are required to undertake the training (and WWCC check) before commencing their ministries.

**2. Financial Assistance legislation.** A minor update is approved to Handbook 3.17d to use the term ‘Financial Assistance’ consistently here (and elsewhere) in place of ‘Stipend Relief.’- changes are underlined in 3.17d below.

d. ‘**Requests for Financial Assistance** of Deacons’ Courts are to be submitted to the Presbytery and supported by a budget for the ensuing year. A copy of the request and budget are to be sent to other Deacons’ Courts within the charge by the Clerk of Presbytery in sufficient time for them to consider it prior to the next meeting of Presbytery. If Deacons’ Courts are able to contribute to the Financial Assistance being sought, Presbytery is to take such into account and forward their recommendation to the Synod Finance Committee. (See 4.79)’

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am for refreshments. The session resumed at 10:51am

### **23.2.10 TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

The Convener, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. Questions and comments from delegates followed with helpful suggestions.

Mr Ramsay withdrew the overture from Southern Presbytery concerning Dr John Lee due to Dr Lee’s departure from the PCEA.

Mr Ramsay presented the overture from Southern Presbytery concerning Mr Zachary Dotson.

It was moved, seconded and carried that Synod move into closed court.

After considerable discussion Mr Dotson was called in to speak with the delegates. Mr Dotson answered questions from the members.

### **CLOSURE OF SESSION**

Mr Terry Buck indicated by email that he had to leave the Synod meeting, and would return for the morning session tomorrow.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12:30pm, closed with the giving of thanks for the meal, and resumed in closed court at 1:40pm.

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator

## **SESSION 4**

**WEDNESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> MAY 2023**

**1:40PM**

The Clerk moved that the court be moved into open court to associate Rev. Samit Mishra and Mr Pradeep Kumar from the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India.

The Moderator welcomed the men to the court.

It was moved, seconded and agreed that the court move back into closed court. Mr Dotson continued to answer questions. Mr Dotson was excused from the meeting.

It was moved seconded and carried that the crave of the overture be granted.

The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. That Committee arrangements for the CPS placement of Mr Zachary Dotson, and the usual associated costs of candidature, be approved.

The Synod moved into open court. Mr Dotson was advised of the decision and welcomed. He was advised of the conditions of the Bond which he had already read. Mr Dotson signed the bond before witnesses.

### **23.2.11 RPCA and OPC DELEGATES' ADDRESSES**

Rev. Andrew Stewart from the RPCA was invited to speak. The Moderator welcomed him.

Mr Stewart brought greetings from the RPCA and encouraged the delegates to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. He brought news of the RPCA congregations in Victoria.

Mr Forbes led the court in prayer for the RPCA.

Mr John Terpstra from the OPC was invited to speak online. The Moderator welcomed him.

Mr Terpstra brought greetings from the OPC. He spoke of the unfailing support of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church. He spoke of growth in the OPC and their ministries. Mr Terpstra encouraged the PCEA in our work. In 2018, the OPC conjointly with the URCNA released the Trinity Psalter Hymnal.

Questions were put to Mr Terpstra.

Mr Alex Steel led the court in prayer for the OPC.

### **23.2.12 YOUTH AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

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

1. Synod continues to pray for the children and youth in the Church and the work of the committee in building relationships between congregations as members of Christ's body.
2. Synod gives thanks and pray for those are involved in the work of teaching Sunday-school and youth classes.

3. Synod thank Irene Steel for her dedication to the scripture search work and Nic and Amelia O'Dell for birthday card greeting and uphold them in prayer.

The meeting adjourned for refreshments at 3:15pm The court resumed at 3:35pm

### **23.2.13 SUPERANNUATION (and INSURANCE) COMMITTEE**

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

1. Synod instructs 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.
2. Synod approves the committee's intention to provide a template of minister's LSL/Annual Leave register, to be sent to all Deacons' Court.

### **23.2.14 FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Convener, Mr Audet, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed and supplementary deliverances, and it was resolved that:

1. We record our thanks to God for temporal blessings granted especially during the time of pandemic restrictions during 2022.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2023/2024 be made on 1st January 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 \$ 30,000 for 2023/2024 Synodical year be granted to the Narre Warren Deacons' Court 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 funded from General Funds to the extent necessary.
  - Be subject to the availability of funds.
4. Stipend assistance of up to \$12,000 for 2023/2024 Synodical year be granted to the Hawkesbury Nepean Deacons' Court 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 funded from General Funds to the extent necessary.
  - Be subject to the availability of funds.

### **23.2.15 GENERAL TREASURER**

The General Treasurer presented his report. It was resolved to receive the report.

### **23.2.16 NSW TRUST CORPORATION**

The Clerk and General Treasurer presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

### **23.2.17 QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION**

The Clerk presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

### **23.2.18 VICTORIAN TRUST CORPORATION**

The Secretary, Mr I Hall, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The secretary presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved that:

1. Synod commend to our people giving by bequest to aid the extension of the Gospel in Australia and overseas.

### **23.2.19 CRCA DELEGATE'S ADDRESS**

Mr Laurins Nel from the CRCA was introduced to the Moderator. The Moderator welcomed him and invited him to address the Synod. Mr Nel brought greetings and encouragement from the CRCA: Behold I set before you an open door....

Mr I Hamilton prayer for Mr Nel and the CRCA.

### **23.2.20 CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE**

The Convener, Mr Ball, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Moderator presented the proposed deliverances, and it was resolved that:

1. Synod expresses its concern regarding the current threat facing the independency of Christian Schools if the recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission are adopted. Synod prays that Christian Schools be permitted to continue to exercise freedom to appoint staff members who are in agreement with its doctrines and beliefs. We also affirm that every child is made in the image of God and should therefore be treated with dignity and respect and be encouraged to discover the full potential of their identity in light of the Bible's teaching.
2. Synod recognises the distress of those families who have a family member who struggles with their sexual identity. We pray that they may receive the appropriate medical and/or spiritual counsel, so that ultimately, they may affirm their God given gender and come to discover fullness of life in Christ.
3. Synod affirms its belief that marriage as God intended is between a man and a woman and pledges to uphold and promote the Biblical teaching on human sexuality. Synod also

encourages sessions to ensure that our congregations are welcoming places for all to attend; to be sensitive toward those who are same sex attracted, or who may grapple with other temptations; and to provide the support necessary to encourage such to live a chaste and obedient life.

4. Synod encourage ministers and elders to use the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples – perhaps to conclude or finalise public prayer. The congregation might also be encouraged to ‘seal up’ the praises and prayers with a heartfelt ‘Amen’!

Mr Tom Reeve led the court in prayer to close the session.

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator

## **SESSION 5**

**WEDNESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> MAY 2023**

**7:00PM**

The session opened at 7:15pm with prayer.

### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous sessions were read and confirmed.

The Convener of the Church and Nation Committee continued with the proposed deliverances:

5. As Synod anticipates the coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023 in Westminster Abbey, we assure him of our prayers so that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way (1 Tim. 2: 1-2). We pray that he, by God’s grace, will be enabled to maintain the solemn vows made (Eccl. 5: 4-5); and to defend and contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). We pray that he may rule with the same attitude as the King of kings who humbled Himself and became a servant (Phil. 2: 3-8). Long live the king. God save the king. The Clerk was appointed to send this message.
6. Synod is thankful for the work of the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL), Family Voice, and other such organisations, which are committed to upholding and defending Christian values in the ‘marketplace’.
7. Synod encourages members to continue to pray for the Lord’s sovereign mercies that He may yet revive us, that we be given a fresh understanding of His majesty and glory, a profound understanding of our sin, a renewed sense of the wonder of God’s grace, and a high view of the centrality of the Cross.
8. Synod appoint Saturday 29th July 2023 as a Day of Prayer to seek the Lord’s mercy and favour. The meeting will be hosted by ‘Google Meet’ and organised by the Clerks of Presbytery, with the technical assistance of Rev. Robin Tso.
9. Synod records its 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 editorial work, and for the witness of the magazine.

Mr Leggott presented a notice of Motion regarding the Referendum on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice that:

Should the referendum receive the consent of the people, then our prayer would be that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christians get fair, equitable and respectful representation on such a body as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice, so that their Christian voice may be heard.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was defeated.

### **23.2.21 THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER REPORT**

The Editor, Mr Klazinga presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. 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 the congregations.
3. Synod continues to support the printing and mailing of paper copies of the magazine, along with making pdf copies of the magazine available by email and on the PCEA website.
4. Synod encourages the Deacons' Courts to consider purchasing extra printed subscriptions for the purpose of: (a) giving as gifts to elderly members who are no longer able to come to church; and (b) making the magazine available for visitors.

### **23.2.22 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

The Convener presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

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. The Information Technology Committee proposed budget for 2023 be approved and funds provided for the work of this Committee.

### **23.2.23 PSALMODY COMMITTEE**

The Convener presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. That an appropriate donation to the Free Church of Scotland Psalmody Committee for copyright licencing be paid from Synod funds.

2. That congregations and fellow Psalm-singing denominations be made aware of the possible availability of locally produced copies of Sing Psalms. An estimate for a subsequent print run be brought to next Synod.

Mr Tso moved to suspend standing orders until 9:00pm

Mr G. Hamilton moved a notice of motion to the effect that the Committee approach the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland seeking licencing rights to reproduce and reprint *The Psalms for Singing – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition* along with the tunes as an additional resource to facilitate the creation and compilation of a new PCEA Psalter.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was defeated.

Notices of Motion were called for. A notice of motion was received from Mr Alex Steel relating to Inter-Church Relations Committee.

Mr Trevor Leggott closed in prayer at 8:53pm.

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator

## **SESSION 6**

**THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023**

**9:00AM**

The session was opened at with prayer and a devotion by the Moderator on the subject of Pride and Humility. The court sang Ps 27 together.

### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous sessions were read and confirmed.

### **23.2.24 APC and AFC DELEGATES' ADDRESSES**

Mr John Ferguson from the Associated Presbyterian Churches (APC) was introduced to and welcomed by the Moderator. Mr Ferguson brought greetings and encouragement from the APC. He spoke of the APC's formation and congregations in Scotland. Mr Ferguson encouraged the PCEA with the words of 1 Peter 5:7 – "...[cast] all your care upon Him for He cares for you."

Mr Hall prayed for John and the work of the APC

Rev. Matthew Winzer from the Australian Free Church was introduced to and welcomed by the Moderator. Mr Winzer spoke of the history of the AFC and brought greetings. He exhorted us to seek to maintain what we have attained in our common heritage.

Mr Tso prayed for the work of the AFC.

### **23.2.25 INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received.

The meeting adjourned for refreshments at 10:34am. The court resumed at 10:45am.

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.

The Committee agreed to adopt the motion moved by Mr Steel as their proposed deliverance 2:

2. Synod approves a delegate, to be appointed by the committee, be sent to attend the 2024 General Assemblies in Scotland and agrees to pay the return economy airfare and other associated travel expenses.
3. Synod approves the Committee's ongoing discussions with the Australian Free Church in seeking a closer relationship between our denominations.

### **23.2.26 RPCNA and RPCI DELEGATE'S ADDRESSES**

Rev. Bruce Backensto from the RPCNA was introduced to and welcomed by the Moderator. Mr Backensto was invited to speak and brought greetings from the RPCNA. He spoke of pain and struggle in church discipline, but rejoiced in growth. He spoke of the formation of the RPC Canada and asked for prayer in their own move toward closer relationships with the ARPC. He encouraged us with Paul's words: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ..."

Dr Ramsay prayed for Mr Backensto and the work of the RPCNA.

The Convener presented a video greeting from Rev. Geoffrey Allen, Moderator of the RPCI. He brought greetings from the RPCI and spoke of the challenges of secularism. He spoke of interests in global Reformed churches and those in Australia as well as missionary work. He closed with words from Ps 33 "The eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him..."

Mr Ball prayed for the work of the RPCI

### **23.2.27 PRESBYTERY REPORTS**

#### **NORTHERN PRESBYTERY**

The Clerk presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

#### **CENTRAL PRESBYTERY**

The Clerk presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

## **SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY**

The Clerk presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

The Clerk presented a supplementary report concerning a meeting with Knox Congregation on 4<sup>th</sup> March. The report is reproduced here for reference:

### **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

#### **1. SPECIAL VISITATION - KNOX**

##### **Knox Session**

Presbytery met with the Knox Session in closed court before meeting with the Knox congregation. The Session provided details of how the current issues were affecting the congregation. The Session has already met to organise practical matters. Dr John Lee related the difficulties that he was experiencing in pastoring a congregation that was deeply distressed and very angry with the church courts discipline of Dr Ward. Presbytery reassured the Session of its full support and offered to assist in any way requested.

##### **Knox Congregation**

The Moderator opened the special visitation with the Knox congregation on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2023 with the singing of Psalm 24a, a reading and message from Matthew 5:1-10, and with prayer. The Moderator welcomed the 16 members and adherents from the congregation in attendance and introduced each of the members of Southern Presbytery.

The Moderator provided an explanation of the reason and purpose of the special visitation and then invited the congregation to raise any questions or concerns they may have over Synod's decision concerning Dr Ward.

Most of those attending came prepared with written statements. Rather than seeking clarification of Synod's decisions, the statements accused both Presbytery and Synod of unfair and improper processes with regard to the libel. Considerable anger was expressed over the severity of the punishment, with "the punishment did not fit the crime" being a repeated sentiment. Allegations of malice and prejudice in the way Dr Ward had been treated were voiced. The congregation rejected any suggestion that Dr Ward might be guilty of unruly behaviour. There were calls for compassion, mercy, and brotherly love from Synod in its judgement of Dr Ward while being generally unaware of the serious offences proven against him at the two PRN Synods.

The Moderator responded to some of these allegations and then offered Mr Forbes, Dr Ramsay, and Mr Hall an opportunity to provide more detailed answers to specific concerns. The meeting was marred by frequent outbursts and interruptions, with one person approaching the Moderator while demanding a response to a charge of contumacy against Presbytery. Another member of the congregation accused Southern Presbytery and Synod of being dysfunctional and making totally inappropriate judgements. The Moderator assured those present of Presbytery's and Synod's concern for the congregation and offered pastoral and practical support. i

At the meeting of Presbytery last night (3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023), Donald Ramsay (Geelong) and Jonah Kot (All Nations) have been appointed as additional Assessor Elders to provide a quorum and to help strengthen the Knox Session and Deacons' Court. Ian Hall, the Interim Moderator for Knox, is rearranging his preaching schedule and organising pulpit supply in order to support both the Knox and Carrum Downs congregations. Mr Hall is also in the process of updating the signatories on all the Knox bank accounts.

## 2. SPECIAL VISITATION – ALL NATIONS

Southern Presbytery has scheduled a special visitation with the All Nations Session and congregation in August. At that meeting, Presbytery intends to assist the Session with implementing their succession plan to equip their Treasurer, Clerks, and signatories to operate without assistance.

[END OF REPORT]

It was moved, seconded and carried that the Synod move into closed court.

It was resolved to receive the report. Discussion and questions ensued.

The court adjourned for lunch and closed with the giving of thanks at 12:38pm

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator

### **SESSION 7                      THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023                      1:30PM**

The session resumed in closed court at 1:40pm, opened with prayer by Mr Kerridge.

Discussion of the supplementary report continued.

Mr Tso moved a motion, received by notice at the beginning of the morning session, that:

In view of the increasing needs within Southern Presbytery, Synod to appoint Rev. George Ball and Mr Tom Reeve to be additional assessors to the aforesaid Presbytery.

The motion was seconded. After considerable discussion it was agreed that the motion be deferred until after presentation of causes.

It was moved that Synod move into open court.

### **23.2.28                      REPORTS OF EXAMINERS OF RECORDS**

The Examiners of records presented their reports.

Mr Ian Hall reported on the Northern Presbytery records and found them to be correct.

Dr Ramsay reported on the Central Presbytery records and found them to be correct.

Mr Carswell reported on the Southern Presbytery records and found them to be correct.

It was resolved that the reports be received.

### **23.2.29 ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

The Clerk presented the Supplementary Administration Committee report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Clerk presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

4. Synod notes problems with the form and content of the memorial but receives it on the express understanding that it is not a submission from the Knox congregation but represents the views of its signatories only.
5. Synod receives the correspondence from Rev. William Mackay and appoints the moderator and clerk of Southern Presbytery to draft a response to be approved by Synod at the last session.

The Synod adjourned for refreshments at 3:40pm and resumed at 4:10pm

### **23.2.30 MISSIONS COMMITTEE**

The Convener, Dr Muldoon, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

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 gives thanks to the Lord for the faithful ministry of Mariam to a Muslim community in a village near Dehradun in North India. We continue to pray for those who heard the good news of Jesus Christ through her ministry, and for Mariam herself as she furthers her studies.
6. The Synod thanks Rev Robin Tso for serving on the MC and providing contacts in Sri Lanka and Ukraine, as well as Peru.
7. Synod approve a memorial minute to Miss Heather Beaton as follows:

#### **MEMORIAL MINUTE Heather Ann Beaton 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1928 – 28 December, 2022**

Heather Ann Beaton was born in Raymond Terrace on 22 January 1928, one of three sisters in the family. Heather went on to study nursing at Royal Newcastle Hospital and to work as a nurse at the Mayo, a private hospital in Taree. Rumour has it that she and her sister ran the hospital! Heather attended the 'Free Presbyterian' or PCEA Church in Taree from her youth and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ at a young age. Her minister, Rev. M.C. Ramsay was very mission minded and his daughter, Dr Helen Ramsay, went to serve the Lord in India in 1955. While on furlough (home leave), Helen shared about the needs of the poor villagers in India, their need for medical help and their need to hear the gospel. Her sharing touched the hearts of many in the church; some gave financially to the work, while others, like Heather, felt the call to go in person and serve the Lord.

Heather left for India in 1963 to work at the mission hospital in Lakhnadon, central India. She later assisted Dr Ramsay in the clinic and the village health project at Chhapara. Living and working in India was quite a shock. Heather had to learn a new language, a new way to dress, and a new diet, but she was not discouraged because she knew this was the place the Lord wanted her to be. A colleague writes, 'Her enthusiasm for good work, her cheerfulness and her deep loyalty to the patients and colleagues for Christ's sake were infectious'. Heather demonstrated Christ's love towards orphan children, some of whom she 'adopted'.

One of the children she taught at Chhapara wrote the following tribute to Heather: ‘She is well remembered for her kindness towards the orphans, the sick and many needy people in the Christian community in Chhapara and Lakhnadon. Her desire was that every orphan raised in the mission orphanage should stay back and serve in either the hospital or school; many of the children are now staying in Chhapara and contributing towards the work of the Lord through the ministry of local church. Her labour in the Lord is bearing much fruit now and we praise God for her great Christian testimony in the community’.

Heather returned to Australia in 1976 to care for her elderly parents. In 1982 she went back to India. In the following year she went to visit at another EHA hospital in Kachhwa. In 1985 the political situation in India changed radically, and all foreign nationals had to register with the government. Heather, along with many missionaries, left India at this time. She returned to nursing, before retiring to Raymond Terrace and then a nursing home near Maitland. She went to be with her Lord and Saviour on 28 December 2022.

8. When mission donations are to missions supported by the Synod, congregational treasurers are urged to send funds through the Synod treasurer.
9. Synod recommends that our churches hold mission events at which missionaries on the field could be invited online to outline and update their ministry, and field questions from church folk. This would be undertaken on a Presbytery basis.
10. Synod adopt the Missions Committee Budget 2023/24 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for this period.

| <b>Missions Budget 2023</b>             |                    |              |        |       |                    |              |               |
|---|--------------------|--------------|--------|-------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>General Funds</b>                    | <b>Budget 2022</b> |              | Actual | 2022  | <b>Budget 2023</b> |              | Estimate 2024 |
| Balance 1 Jan 2021                      |                    | <b>23564</b> |        | 23564 |                    | <b>25962</b> |               |
| Income: Investments                     | <b>10000</b>       |              | 13128  |       | <b>13000</b>       |              | 10000         |
| Giving Miss General                     | <b>3000</b>        |              | 2640   |       | <b>2700</b>        |              | 3000          |
| Transfer from Synod Gen Funds           |                    |              | 0      |       |                    |              |               |
| <b>Income</b>                           | <b>13000</b>       | <b>36564</b> | 15764  | 39332 | <b>15700</b>       | <b>41662</b> | 13000         |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                      |                    |              |        |       |                    |              |               |
| IMJP                                    | <b>1000</b>        |              | 1000   |       | <b>1000</b>        |              | 1000          |
| AIM (Peter Smith )                      | <b>3000</b>        |              | 3000   |       | <b>3000</b>        |              |               |
| Visiting Missions expenses              | <b>500</b>         |              |        |       | <b>2500</b>        |              | 2000          |
| Dumisani Theo, Institute & Bible School | <b>3000</b>        |              | 3000   |       | <b>3000</b>        |              | 3000          |
| Admin: Postage, bank fee                | <b>500</b>         |              | 120    |       | <b>200</b>         |              | 200           |
| Interserve-Shekinah                     | <b>5000</b>        |              | 6250   |       | <b>2083</b>        |              |               |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                | <b>13000</b>       | <b>13000</b> | 13370  | 13370 | <b>11783</b>       | <b>11783</b> | 6200          |
| <b>Closing Balance</b>                  |                    | <b>23564</b> |        | 25962 |                    | <b>29879</b> |               |

| <b>Missions Relief Fund</b>                  |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
|--|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|--------|
| <b>2023</b>                                  |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
| <b>MRF Working Account</b>                   | <b>Budget 2022</b> |               | <b>Actual 2022</b> |        | <b>Budget 2023</b> |               | <b>Estimate 2024</b> |        |
| Balance 1 Jan                                |                    | <b>6188</b>   |                    | 6188   |                    | <b>8749</b>   |                      | 11349  |
| Income Investments                           | <b>5000</b>        |               |                    | 4604   | <b>5000</b>        |               |                      | 5000   |
| Other (Donation)                             |                    |               |                    | 1281   |                    |               |                      |        |
| Transfer from Equities Ac                    | <b>5000</b>        |               |                    | 10699  | <b>5000</b>        |               |                      |        |
| Income                                       | <b>10000</b>       | <b>16188</b>  |                    | 16584  | <b>10000</b>       | <b>18749</b>  |                      | 5000   |
| 16349  |                    |               |                    | 22772  |                    |               |                      | 16349  |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                           |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
| Lakhnadon Christian Hospital                 | <b>2000</b>        |               |                    | 2000   | <b>2000</b>        |               |                      | 2000   |
| Lakhnadon Mission School                     | <b>800</b>         |               |                    | 800    | <b>800</b>         |               |                      | 800    |
| Chhapara Mission School                      | <b>1000</b>        |               |                    | 1000   | <b>1000</b>        |               |                      | 1000   |
| Annie Soper Scholarships                     | <b>1200</b>        |               |                    | 1200   | <b>1200</b>        |               |                      | 1200   |
| Dr Dickson Delhi                             | <b>1300</b>        |               |                    | 1300   | <b>1300</b>        |               |                      | 1300   |
| Taleem Centre (Mariam)                       | <b>5000</b>        |               |                    | 3333   |                    |               |                      |        |
| Mukti child sponsorships*3                   | <b>1000</b>        |               |                    | 1000   | <b>1000</b>        |               |                      | 1000   |
| Ukraine war relief                           | <b>1000</b>        |               |                    | 1000   |                    |               |                      |        |
| Tonga volcano relief                         | <b>1000</b>        |               |                    | 1000   |                    |               |                      |        |
| Sri Lanka relief                             |                    |               |                    | 1000   |                    |               |                      |        |
| Fees and Charges                             | <b>100</b>         |               |                    | 390    | <b>100</b>         |               |                      | 100    |
| Total Expenditure                            | <b>14400</b>       | <b>14400</b>  |                    | 14023  | <b>7400</b>        | <b>7400</b>   |                      | 7400   |
| 7400   |                    |               |                    | 14023  |                    |               |                      | 7400   |
| Closing Balance                              |                    | <b>1788</b>   |                    | 8749   |                    | <b>11349</b>  |                      | 8949   |
|  |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
| <b>Equities Account</b>                      |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
|  |                    | <b>159010</b> |                    | 159010 |                    | <b>127240</b> |                      | 127240 |
| Balance 1 Jan                                |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
| Income Revaluation of shares & Managed Funds | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>      |                    | -21071 | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>      |                      | 5000   |
|  |                    |               |                    | -21071 |                    |               |                      | 5000   |
| Income (Retained Investment Income)          | <b>0</b>           |               |                    | 0      | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>      |                      | 0      |
|  |                    |               |                    | 0      |                    |               |                      | 0      |
| Total  | <b>0</b>           | <b>159010</b> |                    | -21071 | <b>0</b>           | <b>127240</b> |                      | 5000   |
|  |                    |               |                    | 137939 |                    |               |                      | 132240 |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                           |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
| Transfer to McSwan Working Account           | <b>5000</b>        |               |                    | 10699  | <b>0</b>           |               |                      | 5000   |
| Revaluation                                  | <b>0</b>           |               |                    | 0      | <b>0</b>           |               |                      | 0      |
| Total  | <b>5000</b>        | <b>5000</b>   |                    | 10699  | <b>0</b>           | <b>0</b>      |                      | 5000   |
|  |                    |               |                    | 10699  |                    |               |                      | 5000   |
| Closing Balance 31 Dec                       |                    | <b>154010</b> |                    | 127240 |                    | <b>127240</b> |                      | 127240 |
|  |                    |               |                    |        |                    |               |                      |        |
| Total Funds Held McSwan Missions Relief Fund |                    | <b>154010</b> |                    | 127240 |                    | <b>127240</b> |                      | 127240 |
| Net Movement from previous year              |                    | <b>-5000</b>  |                    | -31770 |                    | <b>0</b>      |                      | 0      |

### 23.2.31 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The following Committee Structure was approved:

#### **Committee Structure:**

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

**Law and Advisory:** J Forbes (Convener), D. Kerridge, T. Reeve, I. Miller.

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

**Church and Nation and Publication:** GD Ball (Convener), I Miller, JD Klazinga (Banner), John Audet (Archive).

**Information Technology:** D Kerridge (Convener), R Tso, N. O'Dell.

**Youth and Fellowship:** S Carswell (Convener), AA Miranda, J Forbes, Matthew Schmidt, Mandy Kerridge

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

**Superannuation (and Insurance):** R Tso (Convener), DJ Ramsay, AH Steel.

**Missions:** DK Muldoon (Convener), ID Hamilton, JD Klazinga, J Greensill, T. Yoa.

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

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

### **23.2.32 MODERATOR-ELECT**

The Rev. John Forbes was nominated and voted as Moderator-Elect for 2024.

### **23.2.33 TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT SYNOD**

It was agreed that the next Annual Synod take place in the Raymond Terrace Church of the Hunter Congregation from Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2024.

The Court spent some time in prayer. The Moderator closed the session with prayer at 5.23pm

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator

## **SESSION 8 THURSDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023 7:00PM**

The Session opened with prayer. led by Dr Muldoon, at 7:15pm

### **MINUTES**

It was resolved to defer the confirmation of Minutes of the previous sessions to the next session.

### **23.2.34 MISSIONS EVENING SPEAKERS - PFCCI**

The Convener, Dr Muldoon, introduced Rev. Samit Mishra and Mr Pradeep Kumar the Moderator who welcomed them to the Synod and invited them to speak.

Dr Muldoon presented a video on the work of Dr Dickson with VETNET in North India (translated by Rev. Mishra).

Rev. Mishra and Mr Kumar then spoke on the work of the schools in Chhapara and Lakhnadon. Rev. Mishra spoke of school developments into English based Medium schools, which are in demand from people in the region. He also spoke of the work in the presbyteries, with new ones being established.

Strategic approaches are bearing fruit, by God's blessing, in church planting work, in building infrastructure, in community involvement and in some income generating activities. The PFCCI hopes to conduct its first Synod in November, 2023.

Rev. Peter Gadsby and Mr Greensill prayed for the brothers from India and the work of the PFCCI.

The Session closed with prayer at 9:10pm

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator

## **SESSION 9**

**FRIDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023**

**9:00AM**

The session was opened at with prayer and a devotion by the Moderator on the subject of Friendship. The court sang Ps 25:11-16 together.

Mr Hall thanked the Moderator for this morning's devotion and all devotions. He recommended that more ministers gatherings be for the purpose of "iron sharpening iron".

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous sessions were read and confirmed.

### **23.2.35 SUPPLEMENTARY ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Supplementary report was presented by the Convener, Mr Kerridge. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. Synod voted against the proposed deliverance and resolved to receive the petition from Rev. Trevor Leggott.
2. Synod notes problems with the form and content of the memorial but receives it on the express understanding that it is not a submission from the Knox congregation but represents the views of its signatories only.
3. Synod receives the correspondence from Rev. William Mackay and appoints the moderator and clerk of Southern Presbytery to draft a response to be approved by Synod at a later session.

### **23.2.36 CAUSES**

#### **PETITION FROM REV. TREVOR LEGGOTT**

Mr Leggott was called to the bar to present the petition. Questions were put to the petitioner.

The Synod moved into closed court to deliberate.

Mr Forbes moved that Synod does not grant the prayer of the petition. It reaffirms the action taken at the pro re nata Synod of January/February 2023 and expresses its heartfelt desire that Dr Ward would humbly submit himself to the judgment of the court and show evidence of repentance. It appoints Rev. T Leggott and Rev. G Ball to seek opportunity, individually and together as necessary, to counsel Dr Ward, reason with him, and assure him that the sincere desire of the Synod is for his spiritual wellbeing.

The motion was seconded. After considerable discussion, it was resolved that the motion be carried.

It was moved, seconded and carried that the Synod move into open court. A short break was taken and the Synod resumed at 11:33am

## **MEMORIAL FROM MEMBERS OF KNOX CONGREGATION**

The moderator led in prayer.

Mr Tso admitted Mrs Anna Ward as the memorialist to the court. The Moderator welcomed Mrs Ward to the Court.

Mrs Ward came as a petitioner at the bar and delivered the Memorial.

Mrs Ward was excused from the bar. It was moved, seconded and carried that the Synod move into closed court to deliberate. There was considerable discussion of the matter.

Mr Tso moved a motion that having received the memorial from 17 members and adherents of the Knox congregation (dated 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2023), and having duly considered the prayer of the memorial, Synod now appoints Rev. George Ball and Mr Tom Reeve to clarify in writing, and by meeting in-person to explain further to the memorialists the regrettable but necessary decision taken by Synod, after many patient steps, to depose Dr Ward from the ministry of the Word and all offices in the PCEA. The motion was seconded and carried.

It was moved, seconded and carried that the Synod move to open court.

## **LETTER TO THE MODERATOR FROM REV. WILLIAM MACKAY**

It was resolved to respond to the correspondent in the following terms:

“The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia agreed to receive your email dated 29 April 2023 in order to address some misunderstandings apparent in your letter.

Synod is aware of the valuable contribution that Dr Ward has made to the church of Christ over many years. However, the libel brought against Dr Ward related to the ongoing wilful and repeated defiance of the decisions of the courts of the church and disregard of church laws and procedures. The minutes of the PRN Synod meeting on 1 February 2023 (attached) show that the libel presented 18 examples of this behaviour that occurred within the previous 14 months and 17 of those were found proved by the court.

Deposition from office is the only appropriate censure for someone who has refused to repent of these actions and remains defiant against the judgements of Synod. Southern Presbytery and Synod attempted and continues to resolve these issues with Dr Ward privately and through the courts, but he has failed to respond appropriately so far.

The PCEA continues to support the South Sudanese community and the work that is being done to minister to them. We are sad to learn that you have been misinformed.

We encourage you to make every effort to establish the truth of these matters and that you will encourage Dr Ward to humbly and sincerely turn to our Lord in repentance.

Please pray with us as we continue to seek repentance and the recovery of our brother Dr Ward.”

## **NOTICES OF MOTION**

The motion under notice from Mr Tso regarding Southern Presbytery assessors, deferred from yesterday was taken up again.

Mr Leggott presented a motion (amended) that Synod appoint Rev. George Ball and Mr Tom Reeve as assessors to Southern presbytery and relieve Revs. John Forbes and Dennis Muldoon of their responsibilities and we thank God for their assistance in Southern Presbytery.

The amended motion was seconded. Put against Mr Tso’s original motion, Mr Tso’s motion was preferred. Upon being put to the vote, Mr Tso’s motion was carried.

Mr Yoa recorded a simple dissent (received by email, 12:57pm).

Mr Muldoon presented a motion under notice that Synod approve Dr D.K. Muldoon as our delegate to the first Synod of the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India and agrees to pay the return economy airfare and other associated travel expenses.

The motion was seconded and carried.

## **23.2.37 THANKS**

Thanks were expressed and carried by acclamation to the Moderator for his conducting of this Synod.

A vote of thanks was expressed to Rev. Tso and the Hunter Congregation for their kind hospitality and carried by acclamation.

A vote of thanks was expressed to the Clerk for his work.

## **MINUTES**

The Minutes of this final session were read and confirmed.

## **23.2.38 CLOSURE OF SYNOD**

The 175th meeting of Synod closed with prayer, a benediction, and the singing of Ps 133 at 1:05pm.

DJ Kerridge  
Clerk

AA Miranda  
Moderator